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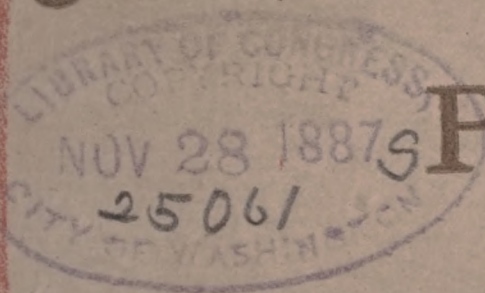
BY

BENJAMIN

PARSON

AUTHOR OF

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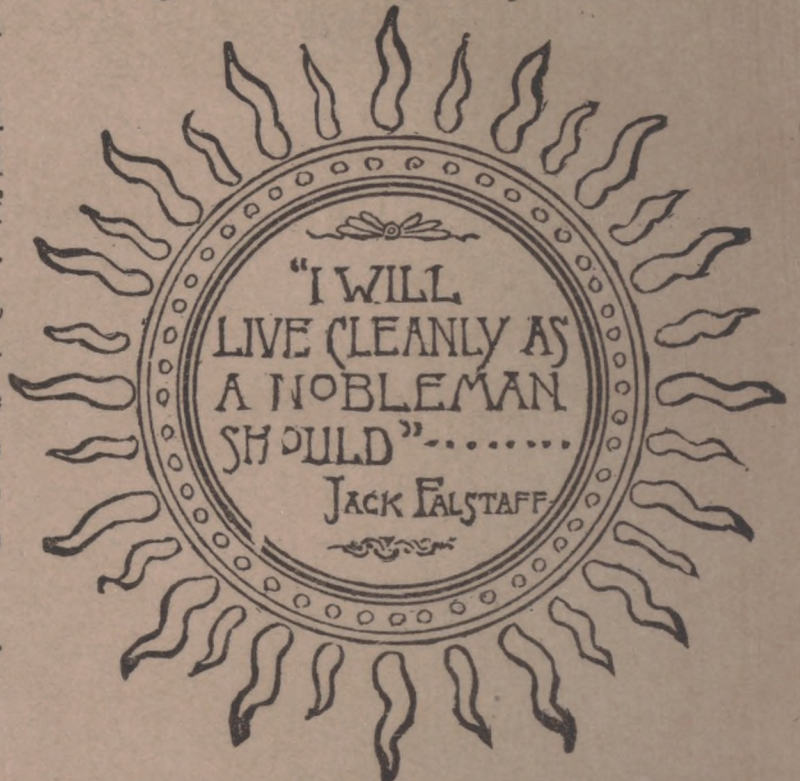
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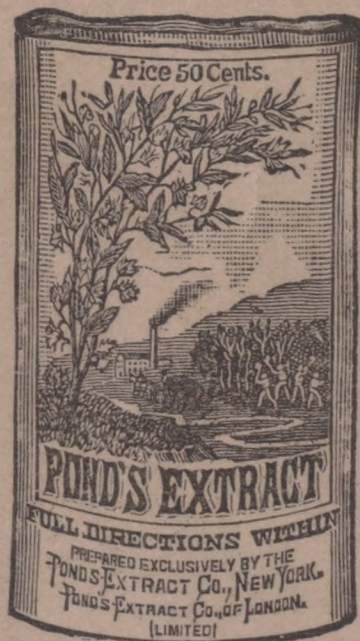


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BY ✓

E. BEDELL BENJAMIN

AUTHOR OF "OUR ROMAN PALACE," "BRIGHTSIDE," "BRIGHTSIDE
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JIM THE PARSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY PROPHESES THE MAN.

"Where shall I get a fellow to go an errand?" asked a young man as he mounted one of the wooden thrones erected by bootblacks for the accommodation of their customers.

"There's Jim the Parsin a-leanin' on that there post, he'll go," replied the owner of the establishment, preparing his blacking.

"Is that his name?" asked the occupant of the chair, laughing.

"Jim's his name and parsin's his natur'," replied the boy, brushing vigorously.

"Well, call the parson for me."

The boy looked up. "Parsin's what *we* call 'im; don't *you* go to be a-callin' 'im that."

"Why not?" returned the young man, amused by the boy's manner.

"'Cause, if you said it, it 'ud be a-callin' names, but we call 'im 'parsin' 'cause we knows 'im." This was enough for the speaker, who at once shouted, "*Jim!*" even if his questioner was not satisfied.

Jim started suddenly, then seeing he was wanted, came to the stand, and asked, in a singularly pleasant voice:

"Does anyone want me?"

"I do, my boy; take this note to the office clerk of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and bring me an answer to the Clarendon. Ask there for Mr. Raymond." The young man handed the note. Jim touched his hat respectfully and went off.

"Straight as an arrow, but very long and narrow," laughed Mr. Raymond. "Now tell me why you call him 'the parson.'"

"Guess an 'arrer' is what you want. Jim'll hit the mark; an' as to his bein' 'narrer,' ef he had more to eat he'd be wider"—this evidently to gain time, for the boy took a long breath and thought a moment before answering the question. "Donno as I can rightly tell why we all call 'im 'parsin'; it's 'cause he's allers a-doin' things as if something inside of 'im made 'im do 'em honest. I'd ruther be like Jim than—anything." The subject was evidently too much for the orator.

Mr. Raymond laughed again at the definition of "parson," and handing money to the boy, went to his hotel to wait for the note. Presently Jim appeared.

"You have given me more than the walk was worth, sir," said Jim as he received his pay.

"Oh, no matter, keep it—you don't look over strong," was the hasty reply.

"Pardon me," said Jim, "ten cents is all that I can take."

Raymond hesitated; he wanted to give something to the boy, whose grave face and earnest eyes, darker for having sunk in deep hollows, had an appealing, pathetic look that touched him; but he was an honest fellow too, and so he wisely told the truth. "You look as if the world was hard on you—let me have the privilege of helping you a little."

Jim was a gentleman: he could do a kindness or accept a favor with equal courtesy. A sort of glint of sunshine

passed over his face, almost a smile. "Certainly, if you put it that way, sir. Thank you sincerely."

"Curious boy that," said Raymond to his sister, Mrs. Devereux, who drove to the door as Jim left. "See how he walks ; none of the uncertain steps of a street boy—he steps like a prince."

"Nonsense ; you are always finding princes among street-waifs. He does walk well, though, I must confess ; where did you find him ?"

Her brother laughed. "I am afraid to tell you, my fastidious sister, that I took a fancy to a bootblack and had my boots blacked for the sake of talking to him——"

"What ! in the street ?" gasped the woman of fashion.

"Yes ; don't faint, for there I also made this distinguished acquaintance ; he is known as 'Jim the Parson.'"

Jim was out of sight then ; Mrs. Devereux vouchsafed no more interest, but after inviting her brother to dinner, to meet their old friend the Rev. Mr. Thornton, entered her carriage and drove off. Raymond wished he had asked Jim where he lived, reproached himself for the neglect, but was not too much troubled about it to lose his appetite for his luncheon, a refreshment utterly unknown to "the parsin," who went back to his little friend the bootblack.

Jim—my hero—for he was a hero in his way, was a noble, straightforward fellow, uniting the self-abnegation of a missionary and the endurance of a martyr with the bravery of a soldier and the gentleness of a Christian. I mean of a true Christian, one who can unite bravery with the characteristics of a gentleman, for he was kind as well as brave. Like Tom Brown of Rugby, he never bullied a little boy nor feared a big one. He was faithful to his hours of work, and devoted all his earnings to the support of his mother and little sister, whom he proudly

called "my family." Two years before this, his mother died, and now his "family" was only his sister, little May, who was his charge and his delight. To give her a safe home, to make her happy, to have her arms around him when the evening came, and to hear the music of the words "dear old Jim" was full satisfaction for the day's weariness. And untold weariness is the fate of many a "street boy."

In the evening the day's history was first told, with all that could make it amusing to the little girl; then the money was counted and hidden behind a brick in the chimney, the health of Dulcibella, the doll, gravely considered, the geranium examined, its leaves counted, till May was ready for their prayer, and for sleep.

"Jim"—he is a great favorite of mine, and my pen lingers as I tell how the boy prophesied the man—bore himself above his fellows, as together they struggled for their daily bread. No oath was ever heard upon his lips, no angry word disgraced them. If he saw dishonesty or meanness, his words were to the point, and his companions would rather brave the policeman's club than hear them. He was innately a gentleman: he shrank instinctively from what was low or vulgar, walking as if clad in armor amid the showers of vulgarity and the heavy rain of profanity and sin under which so many of our street boys fall. "A gentleman," I use the word as descriptive, Jim was satisfied if he could reach his ideal of *manliness* but I have told before this of one gift of his that even noble men do not always possess. He could do a kindness or receive a favor with equal gracefulness.

In thinking of what he was I have forgotten to tell how he looked. He was tall and pale and thin, and grew paler and thinner every day. It was well that the boys respected him now, for at the time of which I am telling, Jim had lost his strength and could hardly have come out con-

queror in a fight for even the most persecuted of his little friends. He had dark eyes and dark hair, like other heroes, and his features, I believe, were all according to rule ; a certain gravity which seemed to cover a heart full of emotion, and a gleam of a smile, when he was pleased, have lingered in my memory more than any individual feature.

That "gleam" was a ray of light when his eyes rested on his little sister. If you had told him of it, he would have looked up with the quaint wonder of a child, and gravely accounted for it by saying :

"May smiled, I think."

I said he was pale and thin ; his voice too had lost its power. He could still cry the names of the newspapers, still black boots or go on errands between the morning and evening delivery, but each day the effort was greater. At last there came a day when the houses seemed swimming past him ; it was the day on which he took Mr. Raymond's note, and when he was nearly run over as he returned to his post. So ill was he that his friend the bootblack exclaimed : "Hallo, parsin, you're in for a job of doctor's work. Go home, old boy, or we'll have to carry you ; 'tain't no use to keep a-holdin' on."

He went home, and May saw that he was tired, too tired to tell her the usual story of his day's adventures. So she made him go to bed, where he slept all the afternoon, all the long evening, all night, too, and then waked to the sad certainty that he was ill. His limbs ached, his head ached ; he could not lift himself from the straw bed on which he lay.

"May ! little May !" he called, "can you bring me some water ? It's that I want, I think."

"What's up, Jim ?" exclaimed the child, rubbing her eyes and scrambling from her bed, the other side of the room.

"You're up, Tot, and I'm not," said her brother, with an effort to be cheerful.

"Oh, Jim, dear, how you do look! You're as red as fire. What is the matter? What can I do for you? Now, Jim, don't go and be ill, you dear old boy," exclaimed May, as she handed him the water.

He drank eagerly, and then for a moment relieved by the "draught of cool refreshment," tried to collect his thoughts, that he might face this new dilemma.

"Listen to me, May," he said. "I've been trying to get up for some time, little sister, but something holds me down. I want to make out what is best to do about you." And here Jim held his head tight with both hands. "I won't want anything but water—sick people don't eat—and there's a little rent money behind the brick in the chimney; you will have to take it to get things. Maybe it will do till I get well. Don't go out unless you have to—Susy will buy you some bread. If you do go, walk fast, and don't speak to anyone. Say our number over and over; don't forget it, Tot, dear. Oh, my head! And, May, if you can't get on, if I should—I mean if I shouldn't—that is, if you need anyone besides me, go to some of the preachers and tell about us. I thought I could always take care of you, but——" and Jim stopped.

"But what, Jim?" asked little May, who had held her breath to hear every word. "*What*, Jim?" But Jim's eyes were closed, and he did not hear his little sister.

"Oh, Jim, Jim, wake up, tell me more—oh, dear! what *shall* I do?"

Jim gave no answer; the little sister for whom he had worked so faithfully was left to her own resources.

The street boy's work was done.

May soon understood that Jim was too ill to speak. He was not dead, for she saw him breathe; so, looking anxiously at him for a moment, she took the little pillow

which he had made for her, and lifting his burning head, placed it upon it, then bathed his face with water, trying to make him comfortable ; then she pinned his old coat before the window to keep the morning sun from his face—that sun which shines so brightly on the happy, so pitilessly on the wretched. Then she went down-stairs for a pitcher of cool water, and labored up again with it, stopping to rest, and spilling it on the stairs as she struggled with the burden.

“ How it must tire Jim every day,” she thought. At last she and the pitcher, and about half of the water, reached the room. After this effort, she straightened the two chairs, dusted them, and the old trunk, and the bureau, put her bed in order—it was only a straw bed, with one blanket and a quilt—then laid Dulcibella, her doll, upon the outside, and whispered : “ Jim’s ill ; you must not speak or cry ; lie still and be a good girl,” which Dulcibella did for several days.

She could not spare any water for the flower-pot, but put a little more on Jim’s head, and then concluded to have breakfast. There was a quarter of a loaf, left from the day before ; she ate a little, and then tried to light some sticks with one of Jim’s unsold newspapers.

“ It’s queer they won’t burn,” she said. “ I’ve put them right—one at the back, one on top, one in front ; now that’s two newspapers——” But they formed all the blaze, and soon died out. “ It’s better for Jim without fire, his poor head is so hot—and,” she added, reflectively, “ as to that rent money behind the brick, it will never do to eat it up. I may have to get a doctor for Jim,” she thought, as she looked anxiously at her brother. “ It’s good I’ve got enough bread for supper—that’s something to be thankful for.”

Jim and little May never had dinner except on Sundays. They were used to being hungry, and May thought that

everyone had that same troublesome unsatisfied feeling. She envied Dulcibella for being able to do altogether without eating, and once tried to follow her example, but failing in this, said to Jim, "I guess we're made different, somehow."

"I guess we are," replied her brother, with a sunbeam dancing over his face; "and I'd advise you to eat all you can get. Dulcibella's mouth don't open like yours. When she opens it, it is time enough to give her something."

Fortunately for the children, Dulcibella kept her lips firmly closed, and little May had every scrap that her brother did not actually need for simple existence.

Jim was twelve years old at this time of which I am telling, and May was seven. They were very lonely without their mother, who was gentle and loving. A year before her death, she came from England, and during that time managed to support them by making sailors' shirts at ten cents apiece. She worked long after her children were asleep, but with her boy's help paid regularly for the one room, procured food, and kept them tolerably clothed. Little May did her share of labor, too, for she stood beside her mother, and by threading the needles, prevented any cessation of the "stitch, stitch, stitch." There are many such stories. They loved one another, and were not unhappy. One care only the mother did not share with her children: it was the effort to fulfil her husband's last wish. "Why tell them," she thought, "till there is some hope of accomplishing it?" and so the care was unrevealed. On Sundays work was laid aside, and the mother read the "old, old story" of Him who went about doing good, and who promised to care for His children, so they learned to thank Him for shelter, for food, for raiment, and for one another's love. Jim only knew that his mother hoped some time to save a little money to go somewhere, but she had not told him where. After she died he remembered

he had never asked about it; no money was saved, and he forgot it. There were papers in a chest, but the boy's honor prevented his reading them, for they were sealed, and on the envelope were the words, "To my father."

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say, I have sinned."

Jim read and re-read these words. "I have no right to know," he said to himself, but he vainly tried to recall anything his mother might have said. It was of no use; there was no clue; her death had been very sudden. Only this: "I'm very tired, dear children, I will go to bed early." She laid her weary head on her pillow, and in the morning her beautiful spirit was at rest.

Jim gathered little May in his arms. "We must not cry, dear May. Mother must have meant heaven, when she talked of going away. We will try to be good, so we can go there too." Then it occurred to Jim that his mother must have meant some earthly home, as money was needed for the removal, but the mystery was not solved.

Some kind people belonging to a neighboring church attended to the funeral, gave Jim lots of good advice and one dollar, then, considering him amply provided for, left him to his own resources. The landlord, who really felt sympathy for the children, told Jim he could keep the room for half-price, and, as to what was already due, if he didn't mind parting with the bedstead they had brought with them (high posts, carved mahogany), it would cover the debt and pay a month in advance. Jim "didn't mind," and by these charities was able to start in life a rich man—that is, *out of debt and something ahead*. He was sure he could support May and himself on "papers and shines," and May said, "I'll keep house, Jim dear, Dulci-

bella and I. Mother will help me, *I think*—don't you, Jim?" Jim thought so; and if Dr. Burgon is right, she had more power to do so in her new home than in the tenement-house on Third Avenue, where night and day she made sailors' shirts for ten cents apiece.

CHAPTER II.

MAY SEEKS HELP.

I left little May sitting sadly by her brother, who soon began to be restless. "I'm cold," he moaned ; "I'm so cold."

"Cold, Jim ! why, I was just getting used to your being hot. Whatever shall I do ?" exclaimed the child, dragging over her bedclothes to her brother, and piling them on him ; then, as he still shivered, she opened a chest and took from it her little red cloak, and put that over him. It was of no avail ; Jim grew colder and colder. No fire—no food ! She looked around for help ; her eyes rested on the pile of unsold papers, on the floor by the blacking-box. "I'll go and sell them," she thought. "I can't shine boots, but I can sell papers." She seized the papers, and leaving the door partly open, stopped at the next room.

"Susy," said she to a weary-looking child holding a baby, "will you look to Jim while I'm out ? I'm going to sell his papers for him ; he's real ill."

"Goodness gracious me !" exclaimed Susy. "Don't go, child—you'll get lost ; you're only a baby, and the boys is reg'lar wild Injuns."

"I must," said May, sadly. "Will you see to Jim ?"

"Oh, I'll see to Jim fast enough ; but, massy sakes alive ! I'm awful 'feared for you."

May was afraid too for herself, but more afraid for Jim, who she was sure needed a doctor ; so she bravely plunged into the cold outside world.

"*Times* and *Herald*!" cried the little voice.

"Hallo, baby, where'd you steal them papers? We don't allow none but the reg'ars on this beat," said a boy, running across the street.

"I didn't steal them; they're Jim's, and Jim's ill," she said, beginning to cry.

"What! the Parson? I know'd he was goin' to be. I'm awful sorry! Let's see your papers. Hi! that's jolly; they're yesterday's; you can't sell *them*."

"I've got to try," said the trembling voice, once more calling, "*Times* and *Herald*!"

"Here, little girl," said a kind-looking man, "I'll take a *Times*: I missed mine to-day. Hallo! What d'ye want to lie like that for? This is an old paper."

"I didn't know till that boy told me. I'm selling for Jim, and Jim's ill," sobbed May.

"Poor child," said the man, "here's ten cents; don't cry," and he passed on, inwardly wishing that women and children wouldn't cry—"it upsets a fellow so."

The boy too had gone, being in full tide of success with an "Extry 'erral, got the loss of the shipunion." May sat down on a door-step, cold and discouraged.

"Can't sit there—private house—step lively!" said a policeman.

She jumped up, and ran as fast as she could, feeling as if the whole world were against her. Soon tired, she ventured to lean against a lamp-post. She was opposite a large building with a black door. This opened so suddenly that she nearly fell over with terror; but soon so many happy-looking people went in, that she decided it was best to follow them, and see what was inside. It was a church. May had been there once before with her mother, "hundreds of years ago," she thought; "but there's a place to get warm, I remember that." And the shivering child soon found it—the hot black grating behind the

pews. She put her papers down and sat on them, forgetting herself in the new-found comfort, and in watching the people who were crowding in.

Presently a gentleman and elegantly dressed little girl stopped to warm their feet at the register. "You dear little child," whispered the new-comer; "how cold you must be."

"Thank you," said May, "not very—now."

"Come, Kate," said the gentleman, moving off. But Kate stopped a moment, and hastily untying a little ermine collar, put it around May's neck; then, without waiting for thanks, followed her father.

May was stunned with surprise; and this addition to her old dress filled her with gratitude and wonder. Many a glance was turned on the bright-eyed child; but no one spoke to her but Kate, and Kate never forgot her.

She heard the solemn tones of the organ, and the voices of prayer and praise; then a chapter from the Bible about the Saviour taking little children in his arms and blessing them. May had heard it before, but now she seemed to know better what it meant. "Oh! I wish he would take me and Jim," she thought. Another burst of music, and then an old man with gray hair and feeble steps entered the pulpit. He was the Rev. Mr. Thornton, and all the people had come to hear him preach; for he was what is called "a celebrated preacher," and was to stop but one day in the city. And the crowd of people with little May waited to hear his words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

"That's for me," thought the child. "I wonder what he wants with me."

"Come unto me!" rang through the church.

"He's in a dreadful hurry," she thought, "but I mustn't go yet." Fortunately this resolution was strengthened by

an admonition from the sexton. As she returned this by telling him she was "very good indeed," he led her to the vestibule.

"Do let me go to the man in the tub; he called me," entreated May.

"What! the clergyman, do you mean?"

"Yes, sir; he wants me."

"You shall go, my child, when he has done preaching; I did not know you were waiting for him; you may go back and sit by the register."

"Thank you, sir; it's nice and warm there, and I was cold. Jim's ill, you know; that's the reason I am out selling his papers."

"Who is Jim?" asked Mr. Donelson.

"Jim is brother Jim, and oh! he wants me back so much: will the man be long?"

"No, dear, not very long;" and for some reason the sexton found occasion to wipe his eyes as he quietly took the child inside.

"Oh! he's blown himself up again," she whispered, as the old man took a long breath preparatory to his "lastly."

Mr. Donelson put his finger to his lips, and lost all the benefit from the "lastly," in his efforts to control his opposing inclinations to laugh and cry. The child was "wondrous pitiful," and Donelson kept his heart in the right place; but the idea of the meek inhabitant of the "*tub*" blowing himself up was too much for his sense of the ludicrous. At last the people who had crowded in all crowded out. Kate was so lost among the silks and furs that she could not obtain even a glimpse of the child, who shrank away from the cold touch of fashion, not old enough yet to know how kindly some hearts beat far down under gorgeous coverings. Presently all was quiet, and the little hand was slipped confidingly in that of the sex-

ton, who led her to Mr. Thornton, who was in the vestry-room.

"What is it, my little girl?" he said, bending his kindly eyes upon her.

She looked surprised, but answered in her gentle voice : "You told me to come to you, sir."

"My dear, I do not remember. When did I tell you to come to me?"

"Just a little while ago, sir. When you first went into the tub, you said, 'Come unto me, you that labor and are heavy-laden,' and I thought you meant me, for I was so tired, and, oh! now I've stayed so long from Jim, and Jim's ill—oh, *didn't* you want me after all?"

The tears came into the eyes of both the clergyman and the sexton. They understood the matter at once, and as soon as Mr. Thornton could recover himself, he answered : "Yes, my child, I called all the weary ones to come to the Saviour. He has sent you to me. Now tell me how I can help you, and who is 'Jim?'"

"Jim is brother Jim, sir, and he is ill; he was hot, and I put cold water on him, and now he is cold, and I have no fire. I had wood, but the newspaper didn't make it burn, and I went out to sell his papers, and they were old ones, and——" But here the long-tried patience broke down, and Mr. Thornton took the sobbing child in his arms, repeating, "Come unto me, I will help you, my child, as my Master gives me strength."

The poor early learn self-control, and little May struggled to suppress her tears, while the gray head of the friend to whom the Master had sent her leaned lovingly over her sunny curls. She was soon quite still.

"Now," said he, "let us go to Jim—and, Mr. Donelson," turning to the sexton, "will you kindly follow us with some food and kindling wood?"

"Have you no cloak, my child?"

"No, sir, I put it over Jim. I'm not very cold," May replied.

"I understand," said Mr. Thornton. "We will go now. What is the street and the number?"

May gave the direction to the rather disgusted footman standing by the carriage, who banged the door in a way that would have cost him his place if Mrs. Devereux had heard it.

They were soon there. As they went on May told of Jim and of his goodness, Mr. Thornton listening with deep interest, for the story was simple and touching.

"Here we are!" she exclaimed, as they stopped. "Oh, it's *so* long since I've seen him!" and her little feet ran upstairs with but slight regard to the slow movements and panting breath of her friend.

Susy stood at the head of the stairs. "Oh, May, I'm so glad you've come. Jim is queer-like in his head. Is that a doctor? He's awful sick."

May rushed in, not stopping to answer, and Mr. Thornton entered the desolate room. May had both arms around Jim's neck. He was sitting up, his hands to his head, his eyes rolling, and was talking: "Oh, mother, I did take care of her; I gave her all I had, till I took fire; I burned and burned."

"Oh, no, no, darling Jim; I put water on your poor head, indeed I did," cried May.

"I know, you turned the hose on me—it froze me—I know."

"Oh, no, *no*, dear, precious Jim; don't you know little May?"

"Yes, I know you well enough; you belong to the hose company—little May ran away."

"Jim, dear Jim, I didn't run away; I've got somebody to help us—oh, Jim!"

But Jim heard no more; he had fallen into a stupor, and

lay upon the red cloak. Mr. Thornton tenderly raised the little girl and drew her from her fever-stricken brother.

"Do you think," she whispered, in solemn tones, "he has gone to be an angel?"

"No, my dear child—no; he is very ill. We will make him more comfortable; you smooth the bed, while I hold him up. There, that is better; now put water on his head again, and be a brave little nurse. We will ask the Great Physician to make him well again; He can, you know."

"Thank you," she answered, not quite sure what was meant.

Mr. Donelson came at that moment with kindling wood, and, better than that, with bread and hot soup.

May's eyes gladdened at the sight.

"Are you hungry, my child?" asked Mr. Thornton.

"Not very, very; I had a piece of bread this morning. Won't you take some soup, sir?" she asked.

"No, my dear, you must eat it all. I will attend to your brother while our good friend makes us some fire;" and Mr. Thornton was glad to turn away from the child, who with quaint politeness was trying to suppress her eagerness.

As soon as the fire was made, Mr. Donelson hastened for a physician.

"We must know what this fever is," said Mr. Thornton; "and please as you go out dismiss the carriage; and send word to Mrs. Devereux that I will not return to-night."

CHAPTER III.

SHE FINDS IT.

The physician soon came ; he knew Mr. Thornton, and was glad to assist him. After examining the boy, he said the fever was not contagious, being a very common form among the poor, and brought on by insufficient food, fatigue, and exposure. "The boy is fearfully emaciated," he said, "and this might have run into typhus ; but taken at this stage, we can prevent it."

He gave the address of a nurse, wrote directions for medicine and for a warm bath, then turned to the little sister, who wore a startled expression, somewhat as if she were watching the progress of an earthquake which she had caused.

"Now, my child, you look tired ; lie down and rest, so that you can be ready when your brother needs you."

"Please, sir," she answered, "I'm not very tired—and Jim wouldn't leave *me* !"

"My child," said the physician, "I see you are a little woman, and can be brave enough to do what is best. I am going to stay till the nurse comes ; after that she may need your help."

"Yes, sir ; thank you, sir ; perhaps this is the best time. Might I kiss Jim, sir ?"

"Wait till he can kiss back again," he replied, trying to be very cheerful and jovial.

May looked hesitatingly at Mr. Thornton, and putting out her hand, said :

"Hadn't I better thank God first? Jim says there is something to thank Him for every day."

"Yes, my child," was all the clergyman could say ; but he knelt down beside her.

Reverently she clasped her little hands, closed her eyes, and told her story to Him who marks the sparrow's fall :

"Dear Father in heaven, thank you for helping me. I didn't know how to take care of Jim ; thank you for sending a doctor so kind and good. Thank you for my dinner, and for my friend who called me, and for Mr. Donnyson and the fire, and for Kate who gave me the pussy-cat, and for making churches so nice and warm, and for the ten cents. I'm sorry you had to make Jim ill ; please send me money to pay the doctor, because I can't take the rent-money, you know, and I haven't sold any papers. Please forgive me if it was naughty to sell old papers ; please bless my friends—and—Jim, oh ! do please make Jim well. Please tell father and mother that he will soon be well. For Christ's sake. Amen."

For some minutes there was no sound in that bare room save the echo of the prayer, but the listeners looked upon lives rich with unnoticed blessings, and asked forgiveness.

The little girl lay down on the bed from which she had taken everything for Jim. Mr. Thornton covered her with his overcoat, and looked anxiously at the flushed cheek and thin hands. "She is not ill, my dear sir," said the physician ; "food and rest is all she needs. I will ask Mr. Donelson to see about the nurse ; it is not possible to desert such children. Whom can they belong to? That child is a lady."

The sexton was found in the hall, furtively giving money to Susy—in a wild desire to do something for somebody—and was thankful to go for the nurse. Mr. Thornton watched the sleeping child. He had been in many a scene of deeper suffering, heard many a heart cry out in

its own hopelessness, had seen many a child prematurely old from want and care ; and he had given help and gone his way. Here he was chained ; memory took him back to the time when he and his young wife watched all night the fevered tossing of their only son—praying, “Spare him, good Lord.” The prayer was granted, and the pallid face smiled upon them. Why did little May, as she smiled in her sleep, take him back to that “long ago.”

A moan from the boy brought him to the present sorrow, and rousing from his reverie, he found occupation in supplying the immediate necessities of illness. At last all was done. The doctor had gone ; the nurse had come ; it was far into the night ; he was very weary. He took the Bible from the bureau and began to read. Little May woke unnoticed ; she looked around—all seemed strange and new. There certainly was a small bedstead, with mattress and sheets, and Jim’s dear head on a real pillow—a table with bottles, tumblers, and spoons, and in the air a delicious odor of lemons. A kind-faced woman was ministering to the boy. On the bureau was a shaded lamp. “It’s the same old bureau—that’s good,” she thought, with a memory of Dulcibella’s best frock in a drawer. Her old friend was gazing on something that was written on the first leaf of the Bible ; she knew what it was. “To my dear boy, James Thornton.—When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”

May went to the reader. “Papa’s father wrote that, sir ; but when papa was coming here he died, so he didn’t ever get that kiss.” She was suddenly clasped in loving arms, and Mr. Thornton exclaimed :

“He was my own dear son, and you shall have the kiss I have kept so long for him.”

Then the child knew their loneliness was over.

“Are you Jim’s father too ?” she asked.

"I am Jim's grandfather ; I am going to take you both to live with your grandmother and me."

"Grand, father—grand, mother—that's two grands. How pleased papa will be."

"I hope he knows it, my child."

"Of course he does. Dying is only going to a new home, where they keep the doors shut. If mamma hadn't died when I was asleep I'd have asked her to leave one of them open. But she can see out of the windows. She will be ever so glad I found you. Now, please, may I look at Jim ? Who is taking care of him ?"

"A kind lady—you may call her Sister Anne."

"How clean he looks," she whispered, as Sister Anne put her arm around her, having listened to the colloquy with deep interest.

"Little May," was murmured from the bed.

"Oh, Jim, dear——"

But the nurse held her back. "He is asleep, do not waken him. Lie down again till morning." But the child was not sleepy ; she yielded, however, to her grandfather's request, so that she might be ready to take breakfast with him in the morning.

With her sweet voice ringing in his ears like long-forgotten music, Mr. Thornton went out into the night. It was a new experience for him to be walking the city streets long after midnight. He had no trouble in finding a hotel. He wrote a note to Mrs. Devereux, and a telegram to his wife ; and then tired nature asserted her claims, and the sun found his way between the curtains before he woke.

When he did, what was the sense of happiness that gave him new strength ? Had old age passed and youth come back to him ? Breakfast with his granddaughter was the first distinct form of new joy ; and the boy who answered the bell stopped to listen to the song of praise by which the toilet was being enlivened.

"Ah! yes; come in—did I ring? Yes, yes, I remember. Breakfast for two, in an hour; private room; everything good that you have, if you please." "Praise Him above, ye heavenly host," was resumed as he brushed his coat.

"*'I please!'*" laughed the boy—"he can have a boiled monkey, for what I care. Little astray in the upper works," he remarked to the scrub-woman; "ordered for two—ain't but one of him."

"'Nuther in 'nuther room, maybe."

"No; prowled in alone, about one o'clock."

Little did Mr. Thornton care for the watchful world of hotel servitors. Still singing, he went for the lost sheep over whom he rejoiced.

Sister Anne had found a very short blue frock in the old trunk; the scarlet cloak over it made a gayly plumaged little bird. The face was bright, and the beautiful hair carefully brushed; even the old hat could not spoil the picture.

Jim was better—he had spoken to his sister; so everything was joyful. The child skipped around the white-haired old man, as he tried to pilot her to the hotel, until their safe arrival there must have been through the care of some good angel.

Breakfast was hardly over, and May's wondering questions answered, when Mrs. Devereux was announced. The marvellous story was told to her, and she being one of those treasures of creation, an executive woman, had May in the carriage, and on her way to a furnishing store, before the child at all understood the new phase of life. Her new benefactor wondered at the mixture of sharpness of intellect and childishness, produced by the little girl having been so often left to her own resources, and was fascinated by the quick acceptance of her new circumstances, with a simplicity that never forgot gratitude. The child's heap of happiness was made too high for her

to mount, when she was allowed to select an entire outfit for Jim, she was dumb with joy.

That night Mrs. Devereux received a few lines from her brother, Frank Raymond, who heard the story, and with much delight identified his new friend, having gone alone, and overcome Sister Anne's scruples about admitting him, so that he could be sure. He wrote :

"DEAR MAUD :—There's nothing mean about me. I won't say 'I told you so.' FRANK."

"What intolerable slang that boy talks!" she exclaimed, throwing the note into the fire. "It's rather a wonderful story, though, and I am rejoiced for my old friends."

Two weeks passed before Jim was able to sit up and to have the events that had taken place during his illness revealed to him. At last little May was left one day in charge of her brother, and allowed to tell, in her own way, the story of the coming new life.

"Then, Jim," she said, in summing it up, "there's the dearest old tower to the church ; it was made a thousand years ago, or years and years ; maybe it was left over from some other old church, and when grandfather's was built they hooked it on somehow. You can go on top, and sit on a *flatporm*, with a stone railing around it, and green vines grow on it."

"I think the roots must be in the ground, and the vines climb up," said Jim.

"Oh, Jim, how can they ? Why can't they grow on the railing ? Anyway, it's lovely. Then the house is on the side—a big room for you, and a little one for me, and a beautiful grandmother with *white* hair ! She is always making people happy. Then there is a Sarah who makes

gingerbread, and a big black dog, and a cow that gives pitchers of milk, and a white horse, and a Richard who takes care of everybody, and sweeps and dusts the church. The church door opens right in the garden, and, oh! there's chickens and flowers, and a tub in the church. Did you ever hear such lovely things. Me and Dulcibella is going to live on the tower."

"Dear little sister!" said Jim, with a prayer of thanksgiving. "Our troubles are all over. Now say something for brother Jim; say, Dulcibella and I are going to live on the tower."

May obeyed, adding: "You are 'most well, Jim, I know by that; you never would let me talk like Susy."

"No, dear, never," he said, with a kiss. "Do you know we are going next week, and this is the place mother used to talk about?"

"Yes, I know, and when we start she will say, 'There they go, the dear children;' won't she, Jim, dear?"

"I am sure she will be glad——"

"Do you quite understand, Jim, that the church hooks on one side of the tower and the house on the other?"

"Not exactly," answered Jim, laughing.

"Now, Jim, see here, don't we hang baskets on pegs? That's the way it is."

"Oh, you funny little May! If grandfather said they were fastened on the tower, he meant built up against it; houses don't hang around like baskets."

"Perhaps," she replied; "but I thought maybe country houses were different from ours here. I believe you know everything," looking at him with loving admiration. "Anyway, we are to go up on the tower. You can see 'most all the world from there; do hurry and get well, Jim. Oh, that reminds me—Mr. Raymond left some old port-wine for you; he has been so kind all the time, I wonder he did

not get you some new wine—I hate to give you any ‘old’ stuff.”

“That is the best kind for me, little sister; I think it makes me stronger; it is my medicine now. Mr. Raymond’s kindness is another thing to thank our Father for. Everything has come around to us in a wonderful way, even father’s old home.”

“Why, Jim!” exclaimed his sister, much puzzled, “do you think it would come around to us if we didn’t go?”

“No, dear, not that way; I mean things happen.”

“Then don’t say ‘they come round’ if you mean ‘happen.’ You said your head went round—that must be the reason you thought things went round.”

“Oh, May, you are the funniest little talker. I suppose it is because you have stayed shut up in this room so much. I am tired, dear; kiss brother Jim and say good-night, now.”

Sister Anne claimed her charge then, and made him comfortable for the night, after which May prayed her evening prayer beside him, adding an especial thanksgiving about the tower.

Then Sister Anne undressed her and laid her in her fresh bed, kissing her again and again, partly in memory of a little sister whom she once had on earth, and whom she had then in paradise.

CHAPTER IV.

HOPE.

Mr. Thornton did not neglect to send an account of the finding of the children to his wife, whose interest and happiness can well be imagined. She pondered over the telegram that only told her that her husband was detained by happiness. Sarah tried to help her mistress to a solution by suggesting, "Maybe it's one of them city dinner-parties; but he don't care for 'em in Philadelphia. Anyway, we'll know soon." No, Mrs. Thornton was sure a dinner-party could not be what was meant by "happiness." Sarah, therefore, having nothing more to suggest, returned to her duties, devoutly thankful that sorrow had not come to the old clergyman. The next day Richard was the happy bearer of the letter of good news, and both he and Sarah were called to rejoice over the glad tidings of great joy. Mrs. Thornton stopped and wiped her glasses many times as she read aloud this letter :

"NEW YORK.

"MY PRECIOUS WIFE:—The children of our boy are found. He and his wife have gone Home. They left two children, a boy—James—and a little girl—May. By a most wonderfully providential circumstance the little girl wandered into a church where I was preaching. She came to me after the sermon—I will give you more of the particulars when I see you. She was endeavoring to sell newspapers to aid her brother, who had suddenly been taken ill. I went with her to see him, and after doing all I could for

the comfort of the two waifs, procuring a physician and a nurse, and making the little girl go to bed, I sat down to watch them. A Bible lay on the bureau, which when I opened—I have no words to tell you my wondering gratitude—it was the very Bible that I had given to our boy when he insisted on leaving us. Do you remember the verse we wrote in it, and how we committed the words to Him who overrules all for good?

“While I was dumb with amazement, the nurse, who was looking in the trunk to find something that was needed, brought a package of papers. The outside envelope was addressed, “To my Father.” They were from our boy—a history of his prodigal life, and of his return “to himself,” written in England, apparently shortly before his death, and with the expectation that his wife and children would come to us. I have not yet learned the reason of the delay; probably it was poverty. When the boy recovers he will be able to tell the rest of the story. Now, my love, I long to rejoice with you, but I cannot leave the children. James, the boy, is ill, but I trust will be well enough to move in about a week. Little May is with me to-day at Mrs. Devereux’s—she cannot be separated from her brother, and will return to her old home at night. There is nothing contagious in the fever, so that your dear heart need not be anxious on that score. I do not propose to you to come to us because I hope to be with you very soon, and want you to make such changes in our little home as will give our two children each a room. The boy knows nothing yet, but May—our child—is full of happy anticipations. She is seven years of age, very lovely and very bright. The boy, James, is twelve years old; of him I know only that he fell at his post, worn out with life’s battle in his struggle to support his sister.

“Wait patiently, dear Mary, a few days. I can hardly retain a proper dignity in my joy, and find relief only in sing-

ing aloud my praises. Send to Brother Mills for his assistant for one more Sunday, after which I hope to be again with my dear people.

"Mrs. Devereux has kindly provided the children with proper clothing.

"Sarah and Richard will unite their thanksgivings with yours, I know, and help you to bear the joy.

"Faithfully yours,

"JAMES THORNTON."

"Indeed we will!" exclaimed both faithful servants, as with a trembling voice the old lady began to sing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

It may be that a passer-by would not have thought the music of the three voices was worth stopping to hear. But there was a pause in an angel-choir, and then the "heavenly host" answered the summons, and bore the spirit-music to its home. On the children's part, the next great event was the journey to the new home.

Before this was undertaken, Jim's street friends came in vast numbers to say "Good-by." He had a gift and a kind word for each one. Some were awed at his good fortune; the little bootblack "knowed it 'ud happen some time, 'cause the parsin 'ad it in 'im;" some were grave, and found their own lot darker in the contrast, but not one regretted Jim's happy prospects. Frank Raymond presided over this ceremony, and added many of Jim's friends to his own list, for although he was himself but little more than a boy, his life was already given to the work of helping the needy. By circumstances that some would have called "accidental," he early became interested in Mr. Brace's work among street boys, and even now his time and money were devoted to aiding those who were struggling to live and to live aright. His sister said, "Only an eccentricity," and much regretted the waste of his gifts;

but Frank, in his light-hearted and open-handed way, never failed in the life he had undertaken—it was, to *Rescue the Tempted*.

Susy was not forgotten amid all this happiness. She and her poor mother, who “did, going out to day’s work,” as she expressed it, received such substantial help that it was long before the weary look clouded the child’s face again.

At last all were ready—the trunks packed and strapped, and admired by the children in a way that trunks with the wildest imaginations had never thought possible. May and Dulcibella had each a new frock for travelling, and May had a satchel, with her name on it in silver letters, a gift from Mr. Raymond, and there were shawls in straps, and many other things, all adding to the importance of the occasion. It was a wonderful time, and made a deep impression on the little girl, who really was entering a new country.

Even Jim’s face was full of those gleams of which I have told you. “He’s laughing in his heart,” May said ; and so he was, for his little sister’s business-like airs were irresistible. She wanted to carry everything, and superintended Jim’s removal, as he was carried down-stairs and placed in the carriage, with the anxiety of a young mother. One of his dear hands was in hers during the drive to the depot, and with her new experience of life in New York she gravely pointed out the churches and public buildings. Jim bore the drive very well, improving as they went on, and was quite able to be interested. He went to sleep soon after they were in the cars, but woke up in time to enjoy with May the canal and canal-boats—“water carriages,” May said. At Camden—for in Jim’s boyhood it was the correct thing to go to Philadelphia by the Camden route—he was lifted in a carriage and driven on the boat, and thus without change up Chestnut Street

to the Girard House, where the tired party stopped for the night.

The invalid slept soundly, and as to May, she was asleep before she was undressed, so that one of the women took off her clothes and put her to bed without waking her.

The next morning was soft and beautiful ; winter was over, and the air so delicious that Jim said breathing seemed enough happiness for that day.

They still had a short railway journey. Mrs. Devereux's man, who came with them from New York, left them after lifting Jim into the cars, for at the station in D—— they were to meet Richard, Mr. Thornton's sexton, with a carriage.

Mr. Thornton always spoke of meeting Richard as the event that would entirely relieve his mind of every burden. He depended utterly on this faithful friend and servant. Richard was his sexton, his gardener, and his secular assistant.

They reached the station of the little town of D—— at six o'clock. A crowd had gathered, and were delighted to see them, for everyone knew some version of the story. They stood back kindly as they saw the pale face of the invalid. Then Richard, who was waiting, joyfully took possession of the party. He carried Jim to the carriage as if he were a baby, lifted May in before she could remonstrate, helped Mr. Thornton, and springing up beside the driver, seemed to take his first breath in a long "Whew !"

CHAPTER V.

FRUITION.

Meanwhile, at the parsonage, for the twentieth time, "the beautiful grandmother with the white hair" said: "They must be coming soon, Sarah."

"It's just six o'clock; we will hear the train in a minute; Richard has gone to the station," replied Sarah.

The old lady shook the sofa-pillow again, rearranged the chairs, and finally took her stand at the door to watch. Soon the carriage drove up. Richard, without ceremony, carried May inside the gate, where, before she was fairly balanced, the old lady seized her, and kissing her as she went, carried her into the study.

"My! my!" said the child; "who'll take me next, I wonder? Are you the beautiful grandmother?" she asked, with her great eyes wide open.

"Yes, I suppose so, you darling precious child. Will you try to love me?"

"Aren't you sure? I want the right one."

"Oh, I'm the right one," said the rather astonished old lady.

"Then I've been loving you for two weeks."

"You precious dear"—but here May was landed rather suddenly on her feet, for Richard came in carrying Jim, and the joyful grandmother hastened to greet him. Jim smiled his rare, beautiful smile, trying to return the loving words and deeds, while May was shaking herself in order

again, exclaiming, "I never was so shoooken up before—never in all my life."

"Our boy is like cracked china, dear wifey," said Mr. Thornton ; "treat him gently."

May laughed, and putting both arms around his neck—"We will put you on a shelf, you dear old teapot." At this, and the look of love that passed between the two, Mrs. Thornton would have begun all over again, had not Sarah made her presence known.

"Shall I take Miss May up-stairs and get her ready for tea?" she asked.

"Yes, please, Sarah, but bring her down again as soon as you possibly can."

May went with Sarah, who, anxious to do something for the little girl, asked if she might carry her up.

"Oh, dear me! No, indeed; I can run like everything," exclaimed May, who particularly liked to be on her feet; and away she went, so fast that the good woman was left far behind. She waited at the top of the stairs to know where to go, but was in too great haste to return to Jim and her grandparents to notice much about her room, or to talk. She won Sarah's heart by kissing her and telling her she was "lovely," upon which Sarah furtively glanced at the glass, wondering if her plain face could be lovely even to a little child. May did not give her time to decide the matter, but taking her hand, said:

"Come Sarah, I can't stay away another minute. I'm clean enough—I've 'most had my skin washed off lately;" and Sarah was whisked down again before she was quite sure that she had done anything but look at her. It was too late to rectify mistakes, for May was on her grandmother's lap before Sarah reached the door, chattering about everything she saw that was new to her, and having every word listened to as if it contained some wonderful revelation. Perhaps it did, for the untrammelled fancies

of a child are pictures of a bright, pure world on which many a weary heart would do well to look.

The tea-table was soon spread, and May seated in the high chair that her father had used when he was a boy.

"What a little mite of a father I must have had," said she; "wouldn't it have been nice to play with him?"

"But, my child, he grew up to be a man," explained her grandmother.

"Oh, did he?" said May, rather disappointed. "I suppose he did; but I think a little father would have been nicer, though you know, grandmother," she added, "I can't expect to have everything—I've got Jim and Dulcibella to play with."

"Who is Dulcibella, my child?"

"Oh, my doll; didn't you see her? She's lovely; and she's never hungry—isn't that good? It was very good for us, because, you know, we didn't always have a great deal—did we, Jim, dear?"

"No, dear, never any left over for Dulcibella."

"Oh, Jim, if she had wanted it, we could have had a fast day—don't you remember, Jim, we did sometimes?"

"Poor little May," sighed Jim.

But it was "poor little May" no longer; she was radiant, and unconsciously queening it over the whole family. Even Sarah, who was standing at the door, was equally delighted whether sense or nonsense came from the high chair.

Jim had a strange feeling of content; he had so long waked every morning with the burden of life heavy upon him, and every night gone to bed with it still unlifted, that to know now that his darling was safe and happy, where neither cold nor hunger could touch her again, was an indescribable peace and rest. Richard elected himself both nurse and valet, and carefully waited on "Master Jeems," as he called him, forestalling all his wants, ready

to be hands or feet, or to serve in any sort of needed capacity. He and Sarah had been in the parsonage as long as Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, not only doing all the work, but superintending all the arrangements, their judgment and executive talents being generally yielded to with perfect reliance. Jim was inspired with the same trust, and had an odd sort of comfortable feeling that Richard would give him strength, and when he was well would tell him, so meanwhile he need have no concern. He enjoyed the tea, and particularly the little figure in the high chair, and his eyes filled with tears of gratitude as he looked, whereupon Richard whispered :

“Eat some more, Master Jeems ; 'tain't good to have feelin's ; don't think none ; just let me attend to that ; you eat and sleep, that's all you've got to do.”

But Jim was destined to feel and to remember that first evening in his grandfather's home ; its impression was never effaced.

When tea was over, Sarah removed the table, replenished the fire, and gave May another chair, as low as the other was high. She dragged it over beside her brother, saying : “See, Jim, I am your little May again now ; isn't it funny to have chairs for all sizes of people.”

Sarah looked at Mrs. Thornton as if such a wonderful speech had never been made before, and the grandmother raised her hands and eyes with a heart too full for words. Her arm-chair was placed on one side of the fire, Mr. Thornton's on the other, where they could see the children without seeming to watch them. After a little more conversation, Jim, who was very tired, closed his eyes. His grandfather at once went to him. “My boy,” he said, for he loved to call him “my boy,” “are you too tired for us to have prayers before you go up-stairs ?”

“No, grandfather,” he replied ; “not if I may lie on the sofa.”

"Do not move, my dear boy; ring, please, Mary, for Sarah and Richard, and May, darling, will you bring me that little table, and place that large Bible on it."

It delighted May to be of use, and she soon placed the table and Bible by her grandfather. He went first to his organ, which stood in the corner of the room, and taking his seat before it, played in soft and gentle tones the evening hymn. They needed no books, for the family at the parsonage had sung the same hymn together every evening for many years, and sweet was the music that was borne aloft that night.

Then followed the reading of a psalm of praise, the natural utterance of a full heart. Jim and May were but children, and yet they recognized this communion of the white-haired old man with his Creator, and knew that these inspired words best relieved his heart of its load of joy. After this they kneeled in prayer and were carried by their grandfather into the presence of a loving Saviour. Mr. Thornton's prayers were interviews with his Lord; he did not plead for pardon, for he had accepted this long before. He talked as to a friend. After a true-hearted thanksgiving, he devoted his new-found treasures to the Lord, asking for them nothing but His love. He held nothing back, earnestly pleading that the consecration should be complete—"All we have, and are, to Thy service, that we may never have a thought that will end lower than Thy Courts. To Thee and to Thy work we devote them, as we have devoted ourselves." This was the burden of the prayer, and when he closed he said "Amen."

"Amen," came fervently from the boy.

"Amen," whispered little May, half frightened by the solemnity, and pressing closer to the shelter of Jim's love.

"My children," exclaimed their grandfather, "you have sealed my vow. May the Lord make you His own."

Richard stood waiting. "I had better carry Master

Jeems up now," he said ; and it was time, for the invalid was weak and weary.

The kind-hearted man undressed him tenderly, wondering how any "livin' mortal could be so thin." A few spoonfuls of beef-tea were given, and many nourishing kinds of food that he and Sarah considered specifics for all weaknesses were thought of.

At last Jim was comfortably placed in bed, little May climbed up for her good-night kiss, whispering :

"I have a darling little room, close by you, dear ; call me if you want anything in the night."

"Thank you, little sister ; Richard is to sleep on the sofa in this room. Oh, May, how wonderful it is—I feel as if I were dreaming."

"You'd better dream really, Master Jeems. Now, don't talk no more ; you've gone through a great deal to-day. Feelin's is dreadful weakenin'. I don't take much stock in 'em," said Richard.

May went to her little room, where Sarah was only too happy to wait on her.

"Oh," said she, "Sarah, did you see my trunk ? I've got the key. Wait, I'll show you how to unlock it. There ! isn't it lovely ? Have you got a trunk ?"

"Yes," said Sarah ; "a little one."

"Isn't it nice to have one ? And see the beautiful clothes I have in it. Everything is new. You see," explained May, "we were found, and hadn't much of anything. I don't mean we were lost, because, you know, there we were ; but we were found, anyway."

"The Lord knows where everybody is," devoutly said Sarah.

"Yes, that was the way it was. He knew, and Jim and I knew, and papa and mamma knew——"

"But your papa and mamma are dead," said Sarah, rather bewildered.

"Yes, to be sure ; but that don't make any difference. They know about us just the same."

"Well, I must say," said Sarah, "that's news to me, and I'm not altogether sure it's true."

"Oh, yes, it is," said May, confidently ; "and they were just as glad as they could be when I found grandfather. I think I did the finding, after all—don't you ? But isn't it lovely to have grandfathers and grandmothers ? Have you any, Sarah ?"

"No," said Sarah, "I haven't any. You've got the very best kind."

"Do they come different?" asked May ; "I never had any before. All my things seem to be good."

"There's one thing certain," said Sarah.

"What's that ?" asked May.

"You're the dearest little girl I ever saw."

"If that means you love me, I'm ever so glad ; but I haven't done anything for you yet. Jim says we must do something to make everybody happy, if we are only with them a few minutes."

"That's a first-rate rule," said Sarah ; "you've made me happy by coming here, and by making your grandparents happy."

"I'm glad," said May. "I hope I'll do something to make you happy every day. I like you, and your cap, and your smooth brown hair. I think you're beautiful. I'm going to do lots of things for you. I can sweep and dust, and mend—a little—I don't believe I mend very well, but I had to do Jim's things, you know—and now, Sarah, it's time to thank God."

And then little May knelt down and astonished Sarah, as she had before astonished her grandfather, by the number of her thanksgivings.

"Now kiss me good-night. Oh, how good the bed does feel !" and May was asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

MAY'S DISCOVERIES.

The next morning May opened her eyes on a glory of flickering sunlight. It shimmered through the leaves and branches of the ivy that wandered from the great vine on the tower and encircled her window.

"How it dances and prances!" said May; "and how it lights up the blue walls! How funny it is to paste paper on walls. I think newspaper pictures would be nice," and up she sprang to see what made the sunlight so "shaky."

The little latticed window was at the foot of the bed, and May stood delighted by it. The grass was just beginning to show a little green; the church tower was close beside her window, its ivy covering alive with innumerable birds, in and out, up and down, twittering noisily as they arranged their households for the day. She soon found out the mystery of the "shaky" sunlight, for the overhanging branches were full of life—"And the darlings keep shaking them," she exclaimed, "and the shadows dance about. Oh, the lovely birds, the precious little dears! I wonder if I may save some of my breakfast for them," and May dressed as quickly as possible, that she might ask Sarah about it. The toilet duties did not take long to accomplish, but there was no haste when the child knelt down "to thank God."

She paused a moment at Jim's door; as it was closed, she did not disturb him, but found her way down to Sarah, who was preparing the breakfast in the kitchen.

"Bless us and save us ! here's the child up and dressed," exclaimed that dignitary. "Why, I was coming to help you."

"Oh, I can dress myself, Sarah. Ain't I nice ? Oh, I forgot—Good-morning. Can I help you any ?"

"Yes, indeed you can ; you may feed the chickens——"

"Oh, Sarah—the birds—may I feed the birds that live by my window. I'll save some of my breakfast for them."

"Oh, did I ever hear such a child ! There's plenty for the birds, and for you too. Now, look here ; do you see this tin box on the dresser ? I throw all my scraps of bread that come from the plates and from the table-cloth in there ; they are for the birds and chickens. You can take as much as you like and sprinkle on your window-sill, only don't crumb around the room, or spill on the stairs as you go up. But I think if you want to help me you had better feed the chickens now."

"Yes, indeed ; I'm so much thankful to you, Sarah ; and I'll never spill any crumbs, and if I do, I'll brush them up. Am I to give the chickens bread ? and where are they ?"

"Take this kettle of meal and come here to this door. Do you see this board walk ? Keep on it, 'cause it's awful damp ; go straight down till you come to the coop, then throw the meal between the bars."

"Yes, yes, Sarah, I know ; only I don't know what a 'coop' is."

"The chicken-house, I mean ; you can't miss it—it's made with slats in front, and it's pretty full of creeturs. They'll call you when they see the kettle."

The delighted child ran down the board walk, which she called "a bridge," to the coop, and laughed so merrily with enjoyment at the undignified scramble of the feathered fowl that, between the fed and the feeder, there was such an extraordinary noise, that the grandparents, on their way down-stairs to breakfast, were irresistibly at-

tracted to the kitchen door. There they stood, hand-in-hand, looking with a new joy at the little incarnation of sunshine and music sent by the good Lord to chase away the shadows of old age, which had seemed to be creeping so surely around them. "Come, grandfather, come, grandmother—come see the chickens scramble. Oh, I forgot; excuse me—Good-morning; I hope you have had a good sleep," and May jumped up and down in her excitement.

"Did I ever!" exclaimed Sarah. "I thought Mrs. Thornton couldn't never do nothin' till she'd had her breakfast. Them children are blessin's, that's sure. I never did see such a happy child as that May—a kind of light shines all around her. Now, just see 'em come in with her a-dancin' round 'em. Breakfast is ready," she called, feeling anxious on the health question. "I'll have 'em all down with colds, as sure as you live." Sarah talked a great deal to herself unconsciously, and was surprised when Mr. Thornton answered, as he entered: "I think not, Sarah; we are younger to-day by twenty years than we were a week ago. Young people don't take cold so easily, you know, as old ones."

"I don't know," said Sarah, laughing at her own joke; "maybe you'll be in for croups and whooping-cough."

After breakfast May was sent up-stairs to see whether Jim was strong enough to have prayers in his room. "We generally have prayers before breakfast, tell your brother, but to-day have delayed, hoping he could join us."

Jim was sitting up in a comfortable arm-chair by the window, his breakfast on a table beside him, and Richard cutting the tender beefsteak and persuading him to eat.

"Oh, Jim, dear, how lovely you *do* look. I never saw anything so beautiful as everything is—never, *never*," and at the second "never" May's little foot came down em-

phatically. "Are you better, you dear old Jim? Oh, I forgot—Good-morning, Richard. I do so want you, Jim, to come down and see the chickens. They're in a house called a 'coop,' and I fed them, and how they did scramble! Really, Jim, they've no more manners than the Third Avenue children. Now, I forgot my message. Grandfather says if you are able he will come up here and have prayers."

"Now, Miss May," said Richard, "we can't have no prayers till Master Jeems is done his breakfast, and I don't much believe in his coming up anyway. I'm afraid Master Jeems will feel it."

"I would like it very much, Richard," said James, as he drew his little sister to him and kissed her.

"Well, I don't know," said Richard. "If you hadn't no feelin's—but they play the mischief with sick people." For Richard well knew that the sick boy had no strength to endure emotion. He had been trying all the morning to keep him to the simple realities of life. The emaciated frame and the deep spiritual eyes alarmed this careful nurse; the casket seemed too frail to hold the soul. But when Jim raised those dark eyes with a look of entreaty, he could not say no.

"Thank you, Richard, I am quite sure it will not hurt me. I will promise to be very quiet," said James.

"Well," said Richard, "I hope Mr. Thornton will make a composin' prayer, and not harrer up our feelin's, like he does sometimes. I'm 'most afraid to trust him."

May waited patiently while Richard decided the question, and then returned with the answer that "in ten minutes Master Jeems would be ready, and please be composin'."

Mr. Thornton took the hint, and the morning prayers in Jim's room did him no harm, but were a memory and an influence on the life of the boy.

After prayers Mrs. Thornton brought her work to the room in which centred their hopes and fears, and seated beside Jim, said she would take care of him while Mr. Thornton was occupied in his study and Richard in sweeping the church.

"Can I thread your needles for you, grandmother?" asked May. "I always did for mamma, so that she could sew straight on without stopping."

"Thank you, my darling child, I like to stop now and then; and I want you to amuse yourself to-day by running all around the house and finding out everything about it. I will be here, and you can run in and out and tell me your discoveries."

Nothing could have delighted the child more than this, for she was very fond of investigation. It also amused James, who was only able to look on and listen. The years of work and of privation were revenging themselves now, and although all fever was gone, it was hard to restore the wasted strength. He was very patient and uncomplaining, but was too weak to care for much except rest and food—and yet, never too weak to turn his brightest look on little May. There was something very touching to the grandparents in this love of the children for each other—it was in each case so utterly self-forgetful. Jim's thoughts were all for May, and May's all for Jim.

The little girl first examined the house, constantly running to her grandmother with questions, or with some article the use of which was quite unknown to her. She then interviewed Sarah, and was much interested in the pudding for dinner, and of course helped to beat the eggs, dancing with delight when they rose to a white froth—"Just like a snow-bank, Sarah; do you think the angels make the snow that way?"

"I can't say I do," said Sarah; "my opinion is, the angels have something better to do than to beat up snow-banks."

"But, Sarah, dear, child-angels like me. But what is that bark?"

"It's Rover in the barn; go see him, if you like—he won't hurt you."

May ran to the barn, calling "I'm coming, Rover; I didn't know you were there before."

She discovered a large Newfoundland dog, who was fastened in the barn lest he should frighten the children on their first arrival. He was good-natured enough, but an immense animal, and rather boisterous, particularly disposed to be so to-day, for he did not understand being chained, and much as he enjoyed running beside the old white horse, and jumping up at his nose, rather wearied of his society indoors. May soon made the dog's acquaintance, and fearlessly patted and talked, sympathizing loudly about the chain. "I can't stand it another minute, Rover; I'll go for Richard." Rover understood every word, and signifying that this was the proper thing for her to do, off she ran, and found Richard in the church, which he was diligently sweeping. A back entrance opened into the little garden of the parsonage, and as May opened the door she exclaimed: "How lovely! Is it our church? Do you always sweep it? May I help you dust? And, oh, Richard, please come and unfasten Rover—he's got a dreadful chain on his collar."

"To be sure I will, if you are not afraid of him; he won't bite," and taking her hand, the much-amused sexton went with her to the barn, where a tremendous barking and frantic rattling of a chain showed that Rover's especial virtue was not patience.

"There, Rover, you dear——" But Rover, in the excess of his gratitude, immediately proceeded with small ceremony to jump on May and knock her down, and then in utter dismay tried to pry her up again with his nose.

"Oh, Rover, look out," exclaimed Richard, as he put her

on her feet. Whereupon Rover, rearing up to ask her forgiveness, to his great distress upset her the second time.

"Well, I never was so upset before—never! never!" exclaimed the child, scrambling up, and putting her arms around the dog, for fear she had hurt his feelings. "You must remember, Rover, that I'm only a little girl—Jim's little May. I'm not a big dog; don't run against me so, Rover, dear."

And Rover said he would be careful, by kissing her gently, for he could, if he chose, accommodate himself to people of all kinds, steady or *tottleish*.

May left him a moment to run up-stairs and ask if she might show him to Jim.

"Oh, no, my child," said her grandmother; "he would knock him over, chair and all. Wait till Richard can bring him up; he has no idea how heavy he is."

So May ran down again, telling Rover: "Another day, Rover, you shall see Jim; now come into the church, I'm obliged to help Richard."

"Make Rover wipe his feet," said the sexton; "he knows how, well enough."

And Rover, much to May's delight, wiped his feet on the rough mat at the door and then bounded in.

"None of your antics," said Richard; "lie down, sir."

Rover laid himself meekly down, and May began to dust.

"Remember which pews you dust," said Richard; "dust the books carefully; never be careless in God's house."

"No, indeed," said May, as if she knew all about it, wiping every book on both sides with great care. "There, I've done three pews, and now it's time to kiss Rover."

Richard laughed, and said it was well he did not have to stop for kissing, or his work would never be done.

Rover was delighted with this turn of affairs, and kissed back again most vigorously.

"Rover!" expostulated May, "I didn't mean you to kiss me—I'd rather save my face for Jim."

But Rover was not to be suppressed by any such considerations, so May left him, and recommenced her researches.

"Richard!" exclaimed she, "there's a tub again; where was it when I came in?"

"I wheeled it off in a corner, so that I could sweep. It's a pulpit."

"Oh, yes, I remember—Mr. Donelson told me so—a full pit; it's just the shape of a tub on a post. Do you call it a full pit 'cause it's so full of clergymen?"

"Pulpit, pulpit, Miss May; what strange fancies you have, to be sure," replied Richard, laughing again.

"What's this door, Richard? It must go into a closet."

"No, that is the tower; do you want to go up?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. I know about the tower; there's a railing, and a vine, and a flatporm."

"Come on, then; I'll show you a view at the top; like enough you've never seen so fine a one before. Wait a minute till I get my keys."

"Now, Rover, dear," said May, sitting down beside him, "you must stay here while I go with Richard to see a view. I don't know what it is, Rover, but I'll tell you and Jim when I come back. It's kept up in the tower. Now, Rover, indeed you *mustn't* kiss so much."

Rover pounded his assent on the floor with his tail, but paid no heed to the remonstrance about kissing. The little caressing hand that was on his shaggy coat was too great a temptation.

"Come," said Richard, taking a huge key from those in his hand, and opening the door, he and May began the ascent.

"Up and up, round and round," sang May; "and what *do* you keep this great kettle hanging upside down for?"

"Why, that's the bell; I ring it on Sundays. It calls the people to come to church."

"Oh, I know; I've heard them in New York. Does it call out grandfather's name?"

"His name? Why, no, it just rings."

"There's different kinds, then, in New York. There's one near to where we lived; it called out the name of the clergyman who preached. Jim and I used to listen every Sunday morning. It said, 'Ting, ting, tong, tong, come along, come along.'"

"What was his name—Ting or Tong?" asked Richard, trying to receive this information with the seriousness becoming so grave a subject.

"Tyng, to be sure. Is the bell the view you meant?"

"No, that's at the top; I just wonder what you will think of next. Come on."

The little trap door was reached, and they went out on the square platform, on the top of the tower. May found the railing and the masses of ivy clinging to it, but changed her mind about living there with Dulcibella.

"Now look all around at the country; see them hills, the woods, the winding river, the houses—that's what I call a view. It's something you *see*."

"Oh!" exclaimed the child, "I think it must be the whole world. Did God make all those things? Will it really all be green in summer? Grandfather said it would. Did he mean the houses, and the brown streets?—will they all be green?"

"No, indeed, only the grass and trees; and the brown streets we call roads; you will know all about it soon."

"May—little May!" sounded from below.

"Oh, there's grandfather's voice."

"Come down, little girl; I want you to take a walk with me."

So May corkscrewed down again, to be warmly greeted by her grandfather and Rover, who were both watching for her at the church door.

She ran up first "to tell Jim, because he might think I was lost, you know."

Jim was asleep on the bed, his grandmother watching him, and May went off contented on her walk. She had so much to tell, so much to ask, and such races to run with Rover, that her grandfather found the walk with May in the country even more active exercise for mind and body than that in the city.

There were visits to be made; sometimes Rover and the little girl waited outside, sometimes went in, and were welcomed and caressed, for Rover insisted on sharing all May's honors.

It was great enjoyment for them all, and when they returned they had such appetites for dinner that the grandmother said it did her good to see them eat.

Jim was much interested in May's account of her day's adventures. She climbed on the bed after dinner to tell him, and in the midst of her recital curled herself up like a little kitten and went to sleep.

Mrs. Thornton soon followed her up-stairs, and stood gazing upon the picture: the pale boy, with his spiritual face and dark eyes, watching the sleep of the rosy-faced little girl. Her head was on his arm, and one arm was over him.

"Dear sister," he whispered; "I have tried hard to take care of her; don't you think she looks pretty well?"

"She does you credit, my boy," said Mr. Thornton, coming in. "Air and exercise are doing all that was needed,

with a little more to eat. When she wakes, if you are able, let Richard bring you down-stairs to my study, where we have tea."

And the evening in the study finished the first day in the parsonage home.

CHAPTER VII.

MAY'S SORROW.

Many days passed like this one. May made friends with the chickens, and the birds, and the old white horse, as she did with Rover, and was adored by Sarah and Richard, who tried their utmost to spoil her; but little May retained her simple, loving nature, trying to help everyone, and to make all happier for her presence than they could be without her. She followed her grandfather around on his parish duties, and many a hard-lined face relaxed into brightness as her sweet voice said: "Good-morning; I hope you are quite well to-day."

James improved slowly. When the soft spring days came he was able to walk a little among the pleasant surroundings of his new home, and to be introduced to all of May's pets and favorites. The grandparents wisely let the first summer pass in simple pleasures, trying to strengthen them both by out-of-door life and garden work. The turning over of the fresh earth, the light summer work with Richard, was very helpful in restoring the boy's wasted strength, for it was before these degenerate days in which malaria has been supposed to be a product of the soil. They gained some experience of life, their many questions were carefully answered, and their religious feelings were guarded and fostered without their consciousness; for in the little parsonage home, under the shadow of the old tower,

there was—if I may so term it—an *atmospheric religion*. What was good and true and pleasing to the Master, was always done, as if any other course were impossible.

In that Christian home the promise was fulfilled, and “Lo, I am with you alway,” was a reality. The Saviour was an actual presence—a sympathizing friend in joy or sorrow, a reference in time of doubt, a loving and abiding Saviour. Faith was there “the *substance* of things hoped for.”

As the cold weather set in, and they gathered around the autumn fire, Mr. Thornton began a regular plan of instruction for both children. May attended the school in the village for a part of each day, while Jim, hardly yet fitted for school life, studied with his grandfather. He advanced rapidly under the careful superintendence of his loving teacher, and both were better for these happy hours of work.

Four years passed, comparatively uneventful as we count events, but most important in the lives of the children. Physically, mentally, and spiritually they grew, Jim almost to manhood, and May, in her beautiful girlhood, still preserving her unselfish character, and still a part of Jim’s very life.

She was nearly twelve years old when the sad time came for Jim to go to college. One more evening remained. They passed it with their grandparents, until the usual early hour of retiring, listening with more patience than young people now can command to the reiterated injunctions about health, physical and spiritual.

After prayers, when they said “Good-night,” Mr. Thornton finished his advice in these words :

“Guard well, my boy, the avenues of evil. Fortify the city of Man-soul ; look carefully at what seeks for entrance

at the Eye-gate, and the Ear-gate. Fill the city with what is pure and holy. Finally—

“ ‘Whatsoever things are true,

“ ‘Whatsoever things are honest,

“ ‘Whatsoever things are just,

“ ‘Whatsoever things are pure,

“ ‘Whatsoever things are lovely,

“ ‘Whatsoever things are of good report—if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, *think on these things.*’ ”

As their custom was, the brother and sister lingered in the old room ; they closed the organ, put up the music, closed the shutters, locked the front door, and then Jim said :

“Come with me, May, to the tower ; let us have our last words there.”

They took the lantern, and going through the dark church, and up the winding stair, went out upon the platform.

“Do you remember when I called it flatporm, Jim ?”

“Yes, May, I remember every incident in our lives. I feel as if I had lived a hundred years. I remember a common inn in Liverpool where our father died. I think he had been robbed of some money, and the shock, coming just after his illness, killed him. I remember that mother sold everything to get money for our passage to America—I remember the dreadful voyage, and mother’s desolation in New York. We would have been spared much if we had come directly here ; but there was no money, I suppose, for I heard of nothing but probable starvation. Then my street-boy life—and then a period of darkness, from which I waked to know that you had found for us a home of love and peace. May, my precious sister, you have been my light and joy during my whole life ; do not fail me now. I cannot see your tears, but I hear them in your voice. The years of separation will soon pass, and then, May, we will be always together again.”

"It seems to me like ten lives—I cannot, *cannot* live without you, Jim."

"In ten months I expect to have a long vacation—perhaps at Christmas I will be home. Look forward to that, dear. Sister May, you have a lovely home ; we have been wonderfully cared for. Continue your life of making our grandparents happy—a full life will not be sad. Then, letters, you know. If we were never separated, how could we write to each other?"

"Oh, as to that, if letters are needed to make you happy, I will write without your going away. Must it be?"

"Yes, May, it must be ; and I only ask of you to live your life just as it is, and to be to me each year the same blessing that you are now."

"What I have been, brother, has been only another part of yourself ; acting without you, I shall act like a person in the dark."

"You need not, if you act for others ; and oh, May, I will want bright letters ; will you not write them?"

"I will, Jim, and, dear old boy, when I want to feel near to you I shall come up here ; cannot some kind meteor take my message to you?"

"Try shooting—tie a letter to an arrow, and aim at one of the horns of Taurus."

"Nonsense, Jim ; I'm not Titus Andronicus. What an impression that always made upon you."

"There is a wonder in the passage that you have not discovered, Sister May. There is a tradition of a prophecy in that "good boy in Virgo's lap"—but no matter for it now. I will remember, when light and joy seem to come down upon me from the stars, that it is a message from little May."

And so they told each other the same old story again and again, until May remembered her brother's need of

sleep, and promising to call him early, she lay down to watch for the morning.

I will not tell you of their parting ; the grandparents were not up, and there was no witness to May's grief. No witness that morning, but many and sad lookers-on for long after. The smile was gone from her life ; there was no failure in duty, no failure in loving services, but all joy vanished. Rover followed her wherever she went, and when she would seek her room and bury her face in her pillow to weep unheard, his shaggy head was beside her, and his tenderest caresses lavished on her listless hand.

"Dear Rover ! Thank you, good doggy, but how would you feel if you were cut in half ?"

Whereupon Rover assured her that he would be less able to bear such a catastrophe than she, and cried about it until she had to comfort him.

The grandparents were very patient with her sorrow, and tried that she should not know how great to them was the double loss ; for May's joyousness had seemed a part of May's self, and now a quiet, sad-eyed child was in the place of the two who had lighted the parsonage with a new day.

She accepted all that was said, and attempted no defence.

"I know I am wicked and ungrateful—I cannot help it."

Rover was the best comforter, and by degrees the hard lesson of endurance was learned ; or perhaps there was no time for self-indulgence, for her grandmother's eyes were failing fast, and reading to her was added to May's other duties.

May's daily duties were legion. She still fed the birds and chickens, was ever ready for the afternoon walk with her grandfather, watched every need of her grandmother, managed on Saturdays to help Richard to dust the pews,

and even lightened some of Sarah's cares ; all this, added to the usual routine of daily study, and lessons on the organ from her grandfather, made the girl's life a busy one.

One evening, "when the work of the day was done," and she had time "to sit in the twilight and watch the sinking sun," May was alone in the little parlor, seated on a low stool by the fire. Jim's absence lay upon her heart like a pall. "It winds itself about me," she thought ; "I cannot shake it off. The other girls enjoy their lives so much ; why do I go about as if a dreary old curtain shut me out from everything bright? I *will* be cheerful—I will—I *will*," she exclaimed, aloud.

"I am glad to hear it, little girl," said her grandfather, coming in at that moment. "I have a letter from James—a very interesting and delightful letter. Come to the study, where there is a light, I will read it to you—and perhaps I can help you in your good resolutions."

May felt for an instant a little mortified that her kind and ever-patient grandfather should have heard a determination to be cheerful expressed as if she were obliged to summon all her strength to accomplish it, but soon forgot this in her joy about the letter, her only idea of a delightful letter being one to announce Jim's coming home, and so she ran with alacrity to hear the news.

It was very different from her anticipations.

"MY DEAR GRANDFATHER:—I will not to-day give you the usual account of my college life, for I feel that the time has come to speak to you on a subject that becomes each day of more importance to me.

"Do you remember the first evening when we were brought to your dear home—when I lay a weary invalid on the sofa in that restful room? That evening, boy that I was, I made a resolution from which I have never faltered. Do you remember how you consecrated your new-

found treasures to the service of God? How when we said 'Amen' you exclaimed we had sealed your vow? My dear grandfather, I resolved that night, if my life were spared, if I became strong again, I would devote myself body and soul to my Master. As you know, I have become outwardly a member of the Church; but that was simply an acknowledgment of the heart's choice. It was a privilege to say under what banner I would fight. Now I wish in earnest to begin the life-battle, and desire, with your permission, to direct my studies toward the ministry. I have waited until, in a year of college life, I could compare my standing with others, and judge in some measure whether I had such qualifications as would encourage me to undertake the work. I think that I will be able to give the intrusted message—to 'preach the Gospel to every creature.'

"Will you please write to me your entire heart and wishes on this subject, for I am as willing now as in my early boyhood to be guided by the dear love and strong judgment of my father's father.

"Gratefully and affectionately yours,

"JAMES THORNTON."

"This letter has given me great happiness, my child. Your brother is eminently fitted for the profession he has chosen, and I am sure you will join our thanksgiving to-night for his decision."

"Yes, dear grandfather, I am sure Jim will be the very best minister that ever preached—except you, you know. Don't you remember, the boys always called him the 'parson.' He was always good, always went straight on, like a car on a track. I don't suppose he could help preaching; he seems as if he was made for it in the beginning." This was May's comment on the matter.

"Now, my little girl, I think you have reason to be very thankful for such a brother."

"Oh, grandfather, I am—ever so thankful."

"Yes, my dear, in your heart I have no doubt you are ; but you must remember that this separation from him is a part of his necessary preparation for a life of usefulness. He cannot pursue the proper studies except under the care of certain professors who are fully competent to instruct him. He needs also to have his mind as free from trouble and anxiety as possible, so that he can devote it entirely to his work. Are you willing to help him, my child ?"

"Yes, dear grandfather, I want to help him, but——"

"I know, my darling ; it is very hard to bear the separation. But what is our duty ? You acknowledge the *wish* to help him—now about the duty of it. What self-sacrifice will the performance of this duty require ?"

"I don't know, any more than letting him stay away, and I have to do that."

"May, when you go to read to your grandmother, do you say to yourself 'I have to do it,' and then amid tears and regrets perform this duty ?"

"No, grandfather, I love to read to her. I love her so that I don't mind giving up anything for her."

"Little May, who asks you to give Jim up to Him ?"

"Oh, grandfather," said she, bursting into tears, "if He only wouldn't take Jim away !"

"If He did not, my dear, you would not have this opportunity of self-sacrifice. He has filled your life with good things ; He has asked no sacrifice before this, but has only loaded you with benefits, and now asks you to part with your brother for a little while, that He may bring him nearer to Him. Can you not love your Master, my little girl, so that you will love to sacrifice yourself, as you love to do for your grandmother ?"

"How can I make myself love Him more, grandfather? Love comes of itself."

"Does it, my dear? Suppose you were to hear that I am only acting as an agent for someone else—as indeed I am—and that your home and all your joys were provided by my father, and given through me. Would you not soon learn to love him?"

"Yes, grandfather, by degrees I would love him."

"What would increase your love for him every day?"

"I think hearing about his kindness, reading his letters, and such things, if I could not *see* him."

"Exactly; now, I want you to think more of the source from whence all your blessings come. Read more of His words of love, think more of what He has done for you, not only in daily benefits, but in the great work of Redemption, the great conquest of sin, in which struggle He gave his mortal life, and for which He still bears the burden of our sorrows, as He makes intercessions for their relief. Oh, my child, think of these things, until your heart lays down its rebellion at this temporary separation. My precious little girl, make your sacrifice cheerfully, and let the hope of the future be to you an ever-present joy."

May threw her arms about her grandfather's neck and promised to "try."

She did try. She sought help where help is to be found, never again writing pitiful letters to Jim, but faithfully striving to help him by cheerful words of encouragement. She gave up her tearful hours in her room with Rover, and was once more happy.

It was not so hard to give Jim up for the Master's service as it had been "just for college, when of course he knows quite as much as anybody there."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT.

The vacations were very delightful to them all. Mr. Thornton always took James and May on some excursion for one of the summer months, and together they visited the most celebrated scenes of natural beauty for which our country is famous.

Mrs. Thornton usually preferred to remain quietly in the little parsonage. "Who would welcome you when you return," she asked, "if I were not here?"

Her real reason for remaining was the failure in her sight. She took an opportunity in their absence to consult a prominent oculist, and learned that her case was hopeless.

Then to keep the sad news as long as possible from those she loved was her effort. At home, the coming darkness was less noticed than if she were in strange places, where she would be dependent upon her sight. Bravely she bore it, bravely watched the night closing upon her, and not until her sight was almost gone did the family know that she was suffering from more than a natural failure of distinct vision.

It was a deep grief to them all; but as she resolutely closed the lids on eyes that she knew had lost their brightness, she said: "No one could be better situated than I am for this privation. Do not be distressed for me; I can find my way everywhere about the house. May is hands and eyes for me, and when she is absent Sarah takes good care of me."

She never called this "an affliction ;" "my privation" was her expression, and no gloom was allowed to shadow the home for this cause. To every friend she would say, "I am very glad to see you," and talked so cheerfully that it was difficult to realize there could be no light for her until the day when darkness would be over forever, when the blind would see and the lame walk.

May was fourteen years of age when this "privation" came upon her grandmother. She at once induced her grandfather to let her leave her school, and pass some hours each day in study under his supervision. These hours May made very happy ones for all, for she insisted on her grandmother's chair being close by the table in the study, where she could hear all that interested those she loved, and with her knitting, was neither unoccupied nor lonely.

Three more years passed. Old Rover died during this time. He came one day to May and kissed her hand with a pitiful cry. "Rover, dear, what is it?" asked she.

He gave her one more look, full of loving appeal, and lay down at her feet. He was dead.

Dear, faithful Rover! Who can write an epitaph for a dog? Who can find words to tell his love, his truth, his patience, his trustfulness, his watchfulness, his self-sacrifice, his long-suffering?

They buried him under the evergreens, just below the garden, near the river-bank, and knew that in this world they had one friend less.

"Oh!" said May, one day, as she stood by her little window, where the birds were just as noisily twittering as on the first day of her coming—"oh, Jim, my brother, my darling, when will we be together again! when may I hear your dear, loving words! when may I see you, Jim!"

Her grandfather—he was an old man now—was passing her door, and hearing her speak, went in. "Little May,"

he said—for he still loved to call her “little May”—“it has been long—a hard separation for us all. I am beginning to need my boy. The shadows of old age are closing around me. My work is weary to me now. I believe I can still give my message faithfully, but ‘the keepers of the house tremble,’ ‘the daughters of music are brought low.’ My boy must come before ‘the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl broken.’ I want to hear his voice in my pulpit before I go hence. Write to him, my child—tell him to see whether the time of his ordination can be hastened. I want my boy.”

In a month from this time Mr. Thornton, with Richard to watch his feeble footsteps, and with May beside him, went to the city, where, in the old Church of St. Andrew’s, they saw their beloved boy take upon himself the ordination vows. His last reply to the questions of the bishop rang with the solemnity of a soul’s consecration upon the listeners.

“I will endeavor so to do, the Lord being my helper.”

And his eyes were raised in prayer to that Throne to which no faithful suppliant ever looks in vain.

That evening Mr. Thornton and May were side by side among the congregation. Many knew the story of the children, and many eyes were turned upon the white-haired servant of God as he gave his fervent responses to the words pronounced by his “boy.”

And when the service was over, when the hymn was sung, “Jim the newsboy” ascended the steps to the old pulpit, glad to preach his first sermon from where the truth had been proclaimed with the clearness of clarion tones, with neither compromise nor faltering, for all the years the church had stood.

His text was—

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”

CHAPTER IX.

HARD TIMES.

In a room of one of the better class of tenement-houses, a widow with four children struggled with poverty—comparative poverty, for the family in the back room thought her rich. She had three hundred dollars a year. On the last day of December she found herself fifty dollars in debt; and the misery she endured can hardly be comprehended by those who know no want; but life and its demands did not stop. The evening came, as usual, to that cold day, and the two younger children, Ellie and baby Will, with Albert, who was nine years old, were eating a supper of browned crusts soaked in milk. The mother who set this repast before her children was very fair and very lovely, and would have been singularly beautiful but for a strange expression about her mouth. A constant effort to be cheerful, a determination to smile at all hazards, had in a few years produced a rigidity of the muscles which, as she one day caught the expression in a mirror, she said to herself, "is just a shade less dreadful than a ballet-dancer's smile."

Like the poor ballet-girl's, whose fixed smile is unchanged by her agony, Mrs. Ray's once beautiful mouth had lost the power of relaxation. She had not joined the children at supper, but was bending over her accounts. Laura, her eldest child, although only ten years old, was her confidante and strong helper. She went over the figures with her mother, who finally exclaimed:

"There! I cannot make anything else out of it. I have added it upward and downward, over and over again. Our expenses last year were four hundred and ten dollars; our receipts were three hundred and sixty—our sewing, you know, dear, brought in sixty. Fifty dollars to pay, and the bills all waiting."

"Perhaps things will look better in the morning," said Laura, quite unable to think of any other consolation.

"Come, mother," said Albert, "and try my brown crusts; we may eat to-day if we fast to-morrow."

"The brown taste is good," added Ellie; "come, mother!"

The mother left the cruel calculations, those unrelenting figures, and tried to make the children happy by taking her portion of the evening meal. The little ones knew that their mother needed more to eat than she allowed herself, and there was often a loving strife to tempt her to greater indulgence. They saved what Will called "a kisp piece" for her, with a tumbler of milk. She pronounced it "excellent," and Albert's suggestion of browning the crusts "worthy of the great man she was sure he would be."

"I'm afraid I'll only be a great cook," he laughingly replied. "All my inventions are in that line, and when I can make bread out of sawdust we will be rich."

There were many merry proposals, for neither sorrow nor privation subdued the cheerful spirit that made the one room a *home*. The object of each one, even the youngest, was to make the other happy. Unselfishness was not taught—it was learned by the power of example.

Nothing more was said of the bills till after supper, when the little ones were as tenderly laid side by side in the one bed, kissed, and prayed with as thankfully as if they were in the curtained cribs and warm and shaded nursery of

which the elder two had a dim memory. Albert crept early into his closet.

"To-morrow being a holiday, I will be very busy," he said; "those shelves are to be put up, and the stove blacked."

So Laura and her mother were soon again in anxious discussion.

"How we can eat less and live at all, I do not see," said the widow.

"Nor I," said Laura, recalling how often she felt hungry.

"What am I to do as you all grow larger? How are you all to be made presentable at school? If Albert were not so careful, I could not even clothe him."

"Mother, dear, don't you remember telling us that God only gives sunlight for one day at a time, and that we are to work on each day's gifts and not look forward to trouble?"

"Thank you, my child, for reminding me. Those lines come back to me, that have so often brought the truth to my heart:

'Foredate the day of woe,
And alone thou bear'st the blow.'

We are not promised help until we need it. I will not be anxious. We must, however, save something somewhere, and it will be best to save where only you and I will suffer, will it not, my daughter?"

"I am ready, dear mother, for anything."

"Then I propose that instead of sitting up in the evenings to read and sew, we put out the fire and lights and go to bed."

Laura laughed.

"What! at dark, mother, like the children?"—Laura was "grown-up," she thought—"and give up our talks and lessons?"

"Yes, dear ; you and I can talk in the dark, and I must tell you all I know instead of reading. You can fancy you are attending a lecture. Come, let us begin now ; do not put on any more coal ; put out the light, and we will undress by moonlight."

It was rather hard, for the evening hours were the rest and refreshment of their day. One room for the whole family became tiresome after two years' experience, and the evening's quiet seemed a necessity. But the mother had lost too much to allow this additional privation to disturb her. They drew out the sofa-bed, and prepared it for the night. The proposed talking was a failure this time—thoughts of the past and of the future rushed painfully upon the widow's mind, and Laura would not disturb her mother.

She went to sleep ; but the mother, as she listened to the firing and the bells, went back in thought to the New Year's Day after her marriage, with its throng of visitors. Then the first happy years of married life, so soon followed by her husband's failure in business, his brave struggle to support his family, then his death, and—destitution !

The story is short in the telling : but long and weary had the years been. Now she was for the first time in debt, and her heart was heavy. But morning came with the sunlight which is given day by day, and the cheery voices of the children ushered in the new year. After breakfast the postman's ring.

"Something good is coming!" exclaimed Laura, running down-stairs. She brought a letter, which her mother eagerly opened, while the children gathered around to hear. "It is from your cousin Kate, and—oh ! my poor brother is dead—your uncle, children. It is all bad news. I will read it to you, Laura—you little ones go and play."

Albert was accustomed to relieve his mother by amus-

ing the younger ones, and, manfully subduing his curiosity, he went through his usual list of entertainments, never imagining that the way in which he accepted life's duties was *heroism*.

The letter was from a niece whom she had not seen for many years, and to tell of her father's death, with the alarming intelligence that at his request she was coming that day to her aunt. She referred to a previous letter which Mrs. Ray had not received. Laura listened in amazement.

"Here, mamma—in this room?"

"Yes, and to-day; she will explain when she comes. I must meet her at the depot; there is no time to think."

"But, mother, stop a moment; we *must* think. She will not be here till the afternoon; what can we do?" and Laura looked ruefully around.

"I hardly know, except that I cannot refuse to take my brother's child. I do not understand how it is that neither she nor your uncle have understood how we live. I have written about our losses; I never exactly explained, for I really did not think my brother could comprehend my life; but I supposed he knew it was a daily struggle."

Mrs. Ray well remembered the life of selfishness that made her brother a home-tyrant, and well knew he would not take the trouble to consider her position; therefore, she had never gone into its details; but somehow it shocked her to know how truly she judged him, and how little he had cared to inquire.

"There is not another room in the house; what can we do?" asked Laura.

"I could not pay for it if there were another. She must come here and see for herself. What we can do after that can be decided to-morrow."

"At least we can have a table-cloth," said Laura, to

whom the uncovered table on which they took their meals was a sore trial.

"Certainly, my child, while your cousin is here ; that is a small difficulty. We will use our nice tea-set also. This will cost nothing ; but we cannot make things better than they are—dry bread and milk, in this room, form too dreary a picture to frame with gilt."

"Oh, mother, can't we have anything else for tea to-night ? She will be tired and hungry, and she has always had everything nice, has she not ?"

Mrs. Ray rose and looked out of the window. She, too, had once "had everything nice." Sunlight always helped her—the shadows were at least less dark.

"Yes, my dear, I doubt if Kate has ever known privation. We will try to have something better than our usual fare, and when she has gone we must be content with bread *without* milk. We are in debt, you know."

"Oh, that will all come right—we can have a fast-day once a week," laughed Laura, to whom present trouble quite overshadowed future privation.

No more was said ; the usual ventilation and cleaning was attended to, after which Mrs. Ray went to meet the young visitor. There was no mistaking the stately and alarmingly stylish young lady (considering her destination), in deep mourning and heavy furs ; but her welcome was as warm as if her aunt had every appointment of luxury to offer her.

"I have five trunks, aunt Alice," she said ; "for the house was broken up suddenly, and I packed up all my 'belongings.' Can I leave all here but one ? I do not want to burden your house with them all."

Her aunt made the arrangements, and then told her niece that she had but a room.

"How do you mean, dear aunt ? A room for what ?"

"My child, we are poor people. We sleep and eat in

one room. Don't look so shocked ; it is large, and you shall have a corner, behind a screen, until we can find one for you."

"Shocked" was a mild term for Miss Acton's state of mind. Her father often said, "My poor, dear sister, she has lost her property, you know ;" but this had little meaning, for her father said the same of himself, and yet his daughter knew neither want nor care. Her utter dismay could find no adequate expression. She followed her aunt in a sort of submission, and when she entered the room and was greeted by the delighted children, she felt like a giantess, and her trunk looked like a small house. The room was scrupulously neat and clean ; there was a dark closet that served each one in turn for a dressing-room ; the food was kept in a box that hung out of the window. Everything possible was done to make the situation endurable ; and yet Kate Acton's brain seemed on fire with surprise and consternation. When her father's debts were paid, she, too, would have only three hundred dollars a year ; he had comfortably planned for her to live with his sister, but forbade her to make any inquiries till after his death—"I cannot bear worry, you know, my love"—and this was the result. Kate found she must dwell determinately on her father's love for herself, that she might forget the cruel selfishness that had spent all in the luxuries of European cities, and had only come home to die, "and that you may be near your only relative, my daughter. Go to her as soon as you can, and tell her how I have suffered."

The night passed in these thoughts, and during its watches Kate made a plan of life. In the morning she was a different person ; she had gone through an experience. She ate her breakfast with apparent relish ; in fact, she really did not know what it was. She then found that two rooms on the upper floor would be vacated that day. She

added them to her aunt's accommodations, and bought some plain furniture for them. Several days were thus occupied, during which "Cousin Kate" was the light of the little family. Then she said :

"Now, dear aunt Alice, I am going to see Mrs. Montgomerie, of Burnside ; she is an old friend of papa's, and I want to consult her about finding something to do. I cannot live in idleness. She always knows what is best."

Mrs. Ray, much pleased with the way in which her niece had accepted the situation, had no objection to offer. She saw her safely in the cars, saying, at the last :

"I think I used to know Mrs. Montgomerie's son's wife ; find out if her name is Louise."

In truth, her aunt had once known them all ; but only at the last moment could she force herself to speak of her old friends.

The "iron horse" was not many hours in reaching Brighton. The sleigh was waiting, and the old coachman was so glad to see her that Kate wanted to shake hands with him.

"Yes, miss, all are well, and me and missus druv all over to find you last week ; we heerd you had gone to the city ;" then the jingling of the bells drowned his voice, and a short drive brought them to Burnside.

A dear old lady, careless of the winter wind, stood waiting on the piazza for her young friend. The dog barked, the parrot screamed, and Kate was welcomed as all who needed its rest and love ever were at Burnside.

"Where did you hide, my child ? As soon as I heard the sad news, I went directly to you, but only to learn that you were with an aunt in New York. Is she Mrs. Ray, whom Louise never could trace ?"

All this time the kind hostess was taking care of her guest, and pretending not to see the emotions with which she was struggling.

"She is the Mrs. Ray, and has spoken of Mrs. Henry Montgomerie. I will tell you the story, dear friend, for natural gravitation brings the unhappy to you," replied Kate.

Not till after dinner was she permitted to do so, and then all was told, excepting the terrible necessity to blame her self-indulgent father.

"Now," she said, "to live with my aunt, in her present home, is impossible! Could I obtain a situation as day-governess in Brighton, and remove the family here?"

"My dear child, Louise wants a governess at once—you shall try it; and there is a small house to rent on Mill Creek, just back of the Herndons. Everything seems to be waiting for you."

"I fully expected you would shine on my path," returned Kate, smiling. "Do you mean that house with the preposterous piazza?"

"Speak respectfully of it, my dear. The house is mine, and I had that institution put up for some children who were not on good terms with Mother Earth: she struck chills to their poor little bones."

"The piazza is delightful—may I rent it?"

"Yes, my dear, you may have the piazza for fifty dollars a year, and I will throw the house in. Not another cent will I take."

Kate laughed, but persisted in agreeing to pay just what the last tenant did; and her old friend consented, well knowing how to have her own way in spirit, if not in letter.

"To-morrow we will go to see it; and now I want to tell you my news. We have a clergyman at last. A Mr. Thornton, somebody with an early history—some romantic affair, excessively unreal, about poor children being found by their grandfather. When I am sure about it I will tell you. He is a remarkable preacher; has a way of taking you to the places he describes—a sort of dramatic power,

of which he is so unconscious that it is not sensational. I think he will be one of my enthusiasms."

"I am thankful you still have enthusiasms," returned Kate. "Your life will never be tame and prosy."

"Never, my dear; I am sure of that. Between life as it is and life as it should be, I am sure of interest while I have my faculties, and when they fail I devoutly trust that I will fail, too."

At this point the Brightside carriage was heard at the door, and Kate found herself warmly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Montgomerie, who remained for the evening.

"Mamma, we want some of your best company tea," said her son. "Lulu insisted on coming before we had our own."

"I have no company tea; you must share the daily Burnside fare. John is bringing it now, and Kate will make it like nectar. Sugar—crystal sugar (fancy my English friend, Mrs. Dorris, thinking we used maple-sugar)—and cream—no Devonshire is better."

"Before she returned home I think she found out how good your cream is; but, mamma, don't be proud; I want Miss Acton to think you are a dear, humble-minded old lady. By the by, Miss Acton, mamma searched thoroughly for you; where did you hide yourself?"

"We wanted you to come to us," added his wife, "but mamma insists that her loneliness is a reason for all the nice people staying with her. Do you not, dear?"

"Yes, I am a grasping, avaricious old lady. I want all the love and all the lovely people"—taking Kate's hand—"but I don't object to your coming to see them. I did not find our young friend, however; she descended upon us suddenly to-day."

"The reason was," explained Kate, "that after our home was broken up I wanted to escape for awhile, and went

at once to my aunt in New York. Although I expect to reside with her, I was not prepared to remain then, and circumstances induced me to come here for a little advice and counsel."

"Mamma has lots that she gives away for the asking," said Mr. Montgomerie.

"I knew I would receive just what I needed," said Kate, for she already felt the delicious sensation of home love, and of being under its sheltering care. The tears came into her eyes, and Mrs. Montgomerie turned the conversation to the new pastor, who had preached his first sermon the previous Sunday.

"Are you quite satisfied?" she asked her son.

"Quite. He has a gift that will recommend him to you, mamma—I never saw a more earnest man."

"That is good. An earnest man is always a victor. Do you remember, in one of Mr. Bedell's sermons, he said the way to conquer a difficulty is to plunge through it, not to walk around it."

"My dear mamma, we must *sometimes* build bridges instead of wading through streams."

"True enough, my son; and you know that when a bridge must be built I can wait for it—but by no means until some particular tree grows for its material."

"How about a hedge of thorns, mamma?"

"I would call that an obstruction, and not a difficulty; but even that could be surmounted if necessary."

"I have a 'difficulty,' mamma," said Mrs. Henry Montgomerie. "The children's governess, you know, leaves us soon. I can neither do without one nor wait for one to grow, to bridge over my dilemma. Do you know of one ready-built?"

"There is doubtless someone waiting for the situation; I will find her for you. When does Miss Ellis go?"

"Not until February. By the by, the children told me

to tell you that Carlo had outgrown his first dog house, and that they want you to come and see his new one. It is a wonderful structure of black-walnut, with his name on both sides, besides a door-plate in front."

"I will certainly come. It is so lovely in the children to want my sympathy."

"Very," replied Mr. Montgomerie. "Though, until you mentioned it, I fancied it was lovely in you to give it. I wanted Henry to put all of Carlo's names on his house."

"I must tell you, Miss Acton," said he, turning to her, "Carlo is a very wonderful dog—pure *Mongrelian* breed, with very exaggerated ears, but a disposition which compensates us for what some carping critics might think are defects. We call him Carlo Dolce on account of his extreme amiability, Carlo Donkey on account of his ears, and Carlo for the exigences of every-day life, which require speed as well as safety and comfort."

Kate laughed, and said she hoped to know the many-named Carlo, and wished her little cousins had such a playfellow.

She then told of the cheerfulness and patience of the children under their privations, but did not define her aunt's exact position; only explained that she was living with strict economy, and that the children were deprived of the exercise that seemed needful for their daily good. Both listeners were much interested, and determined to do *something* about it. With either Mrs. Montgomerie, this determination boded good to its object.

It was too late for further conversation when the guests had gone. "No more to-night, my dear; a good sleep will make everything easier;" and kissing Kate, her old friend left her in a cheerful room, beside a bright wood-fire. Kate did not linger long to build castles of its coals, but thankfully accepted the rest and peace that surrounded her, and was soon in a quiet and dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER X.

THE COTTAGE.

The next morning the cheery voice of the hostess talking to her parrot and her dog was the first sound that wakened Kate. She looked on the clear blue sky and glistening snow till her experience with her aunt seemed a dream, and as she returned the morning greeting of her friend she said: "In the city one loses this clear blue canopy; even hope seems shut out."

"My dear, hope comes from within," was the reply.

"But we need visible things to keep it strong."

"There is hope for the blind and the deaf, my child; it is not of the earth, it is *the spirit's acceptance of the promise of joy*. When the light and love of the Lord is once in the heart, no walls of stone or suffering can sever its connection with its source. The struggle to return is, to my mind, hope."

Kate was thoughtful a moment, then replied: "You are always right, but surely hope need struggle less where such a glorious canopy as we see here seems to be the only wall of separation."

"I'll yield to that, dear; and this same blue sky hangs over the cottage, and, indeed, over all God's creatures. Some are treasures *hid* in a field, you know; but God sees all. The effort to find is good for us—but I will not keep you from breakfast to give a lecture on the strengthening power of struggle even for a mental state. Come, Polly

is calling, and Jip has waited for full five minutes for a look from you—four minutes and three-quarters longer than I usually allow him to wait for anything.”

“Your theories are not always put in practice,” replied Kate, laughing, as she returned Jip’s demonstrations; “how about strengthening Jip’s mental powers?”

“Ah, Kate, animals are beyond my comprehension. I am always trying to make up to them their imperfect happiness. Jip’s hope and faith need no amendment; he is a little deficient in patience, I must confess.”

“Just a little,” said Kate, who vainly tried to repress the dog’s wild expressions of delight as soon as he was quite sure of being the subject of conversation. “Down, Jip, down! you are nothing but a spoiled dog.” This failed to impress the dog with a proper sense of guilt, but a piece of chicken, carefully cut up, reduced him to quiet.

After breakfast, Mrs. Montgomerie said: “Now, dear, tell me more of the particulars, then presently we will drive to the cottage and see what can be made of it.”

Kate kept nothing from her friend, who listened quietly to all as the story was told again.

“I have gone on in a sort of dream,” she said; “one shock followed another so fast that I could form no fixed plan for the future. The only shape that this future took was when I was in aunt Alice’s one room. I determined then in some way to get them all to the country—to find a small house and help support them. I can only do it by living with them and making them share the comforts I can insist upon. Aunt Alice has accepted her poverty as hopeless, and tries only to keep her children well and happy. Your heart would ache to see them sitting on the floor covered with blankets, while all the fresh air that can be obtained is rushing in at the open windows. She told me her neighbors thought she was very extravagant, as opening her windows in the winter required her to use twice

the amount of fuel that answered for sealed rooms. Fancy it, dear Mrs. Montgomerie—some of those people never have fresh air.”

“The poor of New York, my child, are the most impracticable of beings. I had many years of experience with them ; finally I gave all the money I could spare to Mr. Brace, of the Children’s Aid Society, so that the children could be sent to healthy country homes ; for every child saved is a criminal less for the city—and perhaps,” added she, raising her eyes earnestly, “one more inhabitant for the city of the sinless.”

Kate paused a moment. Mrs. Montgomerie’s ever-present faith, her frequent reference to a certain future, had often impressed her, and though Kate was a Christian, she could hardly understand the certainty of one who *never* doubted her Saviour’s love. Few Christians attain to the peace of a certain hope, and yet it is the heritage of every believer.

“There is the carriage ! I long to show you my cottage. You will go wild over the roses that cover it in June. It looks then just like those English cottages of which one only sees a mass of vines and flowers, and wonders at a chimney growing out of the heap. What lovely afternoon tea you will invite me to on that piazza ! I am enjoying it already.”

“I wish you were in reality,” replied Kate ; “I can hardly wait for that coming June. How soon may we have the cottage ?”

“It has been so long unoccupied that I will need a few weeks for repairs, besides which, I want to add bath-room comforts. Can you wait three weeks ?”

“Certainly. I have something to do, also : some furniture will be needed, even though I have a little left and aunt Alice will bring hers.”

“Here we are !” for this talk had been going on in the

carriage, under the difficulties of Jip's insisting on being attended to, for of course he went with them—the word “cottage” having enlightened him as to their destination, and equally suggested to him the delightful mill, where rats and mice abounded, so Jip was more exacting than ever. “He must have sympathy, dear,” said his mistress, apologetically, as he scrambled over Kate for the twentieth time, never being satisfied with the view from either window.

“Yes, I know,” replied Kate, rather glad when he sprang out of the carriage; “he exercised his faith from one window and his hope from the other. I'm thankful I did not put on my best gown. Don't apologize for Jip; we all know him, dear, and accept him and his virtues, with no wish but that he may live as long as he gives you one moment's happiness.”

“Sometime you will love him for his own sake, and not make such long speeches about him,” returned Mrs. Montgomerie, laughing, and helping Kate to shake her gown into condition again. “Now you can only see the possibilities of your home; it will not look half its loveliness until the trees and vines shade it,” she said, as they stood on the little porch. “The view of the stream is cheerful, even now; you can see that the lawn, which at present is invisible green, slopes nicely to the water. This mound is intended for your flowers. Do you know the points of the compass? The porch faces north, giving a southern exposure for the garden in the rear. The tea-pavilion—it may as well have a grand name—faces east, so that it will be shaded in the afternoon. Evidently I planned it for you, though I supposed it was put on that side to give those delicate children the morning sun. We never know for whom we build—do we, dear? Come inside—it may be warmer. But it is a mere baby house. The parlor looks on the water, and also on the mound of flowers that is to be.”

"One window north, two windows west—six curtains," said Kate, reflectively.

"Oh, you prosy creature!" exclaimed her friend. "I wish you to see the æsthetics of the place; we will come another day and have fires built, when we talk about furniture."

Kate laughed and said: "I am in a very practical frame of mind, I fear, but I will try to forget that every additional room represents so many yards of carpeting."

"Forget it at once; or if you do think of it, think of some roseate pattern, and not of yards. Now, this side—east—is the dining-room, one window north, and two east, the east ones opening to the floor on the piazza."

"Oh, how lovely it will be!" exclaimed Kate; "and we need not furnish the parlor until the summer."

"Exactly," said Mrs. Montgomerie; "and then India matting will do. Now, back of the dining-room is the waiter's pantry, and in a small extension, a mite of a kitchen. Back of the parlor a staircase screws itself up so as to leave the hall unobstructed. You see, my dear, I wanted the house to face north; that threw the kitchen on the south side, and I was much puzzled about getting our soft southern breezes into the house. See how nicely I contrived it: by putting the staircase here, I gave free draught through the hall, and by making a door in the southwest corner of the parlor, and a little window under the staircase where it rises, I gave the parlor a touch of summer air. Do you see my wonderful skill?—all done for you, I know it now. House-building is an art, and I am very fond of contriving comforts. Come up-stairs. Here are two rooms on the east side, which I suppose your aunt and the little ones will occupy. I am going to put a railing around the roof of the piazza—it is nearly flat—and the children can play there."

"Oh, how lovely it will be!" exclaimed Kate, mentally

contrasting the present condition of those patient little prisoners.

"Here," continued Mrs. Montgomerie, "over the kitchen, is the servants' room——"

"My dear friend, we have not the slightest idea of keeping a servant," said Kate.

Mrs. Montgomerie looked blank, but quickly recovering herself, said: "But, my dear, you may have one sometime—better have a room for her. You remember the old woman who helped herself to salt, in case anyone should ask her to take an egg."

Kate laughed, and Mrs. Montgomerie went on: "I mean, however, to make a small room in the attic for your cook, for I want to place a bath in this little room; your room will be over the parlor; and here is a scrap of a place, intended for a dressing-room, where the boy may be carefully inserted. I am not sure that it would be safe, unless he is very thin," and the old lady laughed merrily. "Can you really all be comfortable here?" she asked.

"It is simply perfect; but I cannot stay long enough with you to come here again. Be patient a moment with my calculations; I must think about carpets or rugs."

"So you shall; and you shall have it all to yourself, without listening to me. I wish to speak to Mrs. Herndon, and to find Jip; I know he is in the mill. Come there, Kate, when you have finished."

"I have rented the cottage," she said to Mrs. Herndon, who stood outside. "Mrs. Ray and Miss Acton will come as soon as it is in order. Can they have milk from your famous cow, and Nora's help for a few days? You will do the cleaning for me, I know."

"Yes, indeed. It will be a bright day for us when the cottage has folks in again. It's ever so dreary bein' shut up. You see, no one passes, and it's wonderful quiet. I'm sorry Nora is out. She took the monkey for Master Henry

and Miss Mary to see. Mrs. Montgomerie likes her to come on Saturdays. Shall I help you find Jip?"

"Yes, please; he is after mice again."

Tradition never recorded his having any success—luxury may have destroyed his scent a little—but to-day he considered the summons particularly ill-judged, for he never remembered a time when he was more certain of catching that mouse with the twinkling eyes; so Master Jip pretended not to hear. Mrs. Herndon was not his mistress—her "Jip, Jip—Jippy, dear," was no affair of his. Presently Mrs. Montgomerie and Kate appeared. Jip crept slowly toward them, at which Kate unceremoniously picked him up and put him in the carriage, an affront which he resented by not speaking to her the remainder of the drive, and, like other naughty children, was the only sufferer.

That afternoon Kate showed Mrs. Montgomerie a careful estimate of the cost of moving and of living.

"Where did you learn all this?" she asked. "You certainly have never before known much of economies?"

"Not practically; but I discovered before papa died that we were spending more than we ought, and I passed many hours in planning retrenchments which he would not allow me to make."

Mrs. Montgomerie looked thoughtfully at the earnest face, fair, lovely, and queen-like—the simplicity of a child, and the bearing of a duchess.

"She ought to be in a palace," she said to herself, unconsciously clothing Kate in some superb drapery, and placing her in gorgeous surroundings.

At this point the duchess remarked:

"With rigid economy and no servant, we can live delightfully. I am glad I am to teach instead of sewing."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed her friend. "What a descent to my thoughts!" but she refused to explain.

CHAPTER XI.

SUNDAY AT BURNSIDE.

It began that Saturday evening—Kate's new life dated from that time. To her "the evening and the morning were the first day."

The two friends were seated beside the flickering light of the burning logs in the great fireplace of the library. Mrs. Montgomerie turned her bright face to her young friend.

"Kate, do you hear the music of the fire?"

"Yes," said Kate, dreamily, "the swan-song of the dying logs. We often hear of 'the singing of the fire,' but to me there is something sad in the destruction of the wood."

"Like everything else, it depends very much upon how you look at it," replied her friend, in her cheerful voice. "'It is not quickened except it die,' and the music comes with the change into the great glory of the ever-rising light."

"Hesitating sometimes," answered Kate, as one spire of flame shivered and went down.

"Faithless little flame, to teach you such a lesson. There! it is up again—look! rising, rising, a new body clothed in light as with a garment;" and the ever bright face was illumined anew; not less, thought Kate, by the light within than by that without.

"Are you ever lonely, dear?" she asked.

"No, my child, certainly not ;" and her friend smiled at the idea. "I am never alone, so how can I be lonely?"

"He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways," repeated Kate, thoughtfully.

"Sometimes He gives me a little festival, like this visit of yours, dear. You always answer to my *heart*, to the source of my thoughts. My words sometimes hardly express what I wish to say, but you—'Kate of my consolation'—answer to my meaning, especially when you sing. What delightful people those dear old Israelites were. They sung and shouted whenever they were happy. Do you remember when David appointed certain of the Levites to '*thank and praise the Lord?*' Was not that an office worth seeking for?"

"It was indeed. What a good Methodist you would make."

"No, not exactly ; I think the Methodists are striving to establish a condition of worship which belongs to the millennial days. But sing, Kate."

"Let me play something for you first—I rather pride myself on my music, you know," said Kate, taking her seat at the piano, which was drawn out on one side of the fire, as if it wanted to be one of the family.

"If you play as you sing, you have cause for pride ; few are privileged as you with such a quality of tone and such an ability to use it."

"Thank you, dear friend."

"No need for thanks to me, I only appreciate. Thanks are due to the Giver of such a talent. I do not know what you can make of the piano—it takes a master-musician to induce that earth-bound instrument to speak to the soul"—here the piano gave a sad little wail as its owner snubbed it in this heartless way.

"You have hurt its feelings," said Kate.

"Don't do such ghostly things," laughed her friend ; "I

can't help my fancies, even if I am old. Some instruments seem to me to have life—a sort of innate power ; others depend entirely upon what is made of them. Like people, some are suggestive, some responsive, and some sound like a drum with a hole in it ;” and the old lady laughed again merrily at the idea.

“True enough, particularly about people ; I have had such fancies too. The piano certainly does consent to the lower style of musical expression, but its earthly proclivities can be overcome. It is our failure if it quite refuses to speak soul-music. It is not like the organ, which seems like a human soul. Let me try my skill ; if you know what I will say to you, you must never be so cruel again to your piano.” Then Kate ran her fingers lightly over the instrument, as if she were calling it to life—not uncertainly nor tremblingly, but as if she believed in it. Presently long, swaying sounds were heard—they seemed to tell of coming peace and rest ; then a melody gleamed among the chords like a revelation of a song of the universe. Deep harmonies of wind-music followed this, surging through the branches of trees which were alive with bird-carols. A bird-solo, and then an outburst of praise to Him who has made His world, to those who listen, a very joy of sound.

For a moment the entranced listener did not speak, and then Longfellow's rapturous words seemed the only fitting commentary to the music :

“O gift of God. O perfect day,
Whereon shall no man work but play,
Whereon it is enough for me,
Not to be doing but to be.
Through every fibre of my brain,
Through every nerve, through every vein,
I feel the electric thrill, the touch
Of life that seems almost too much ;

I hear the wind among the trees
 Playing celestial symphonies ;
 I see the branches downward bent,
 Like keys of some great instrument.
 O life and love, O happy throng
 Of thought, when only speech is song ;
 O heart of man, canst thou not be
 Blithe as the air is, and as free ?”

Kate, my darling Kate, I thank you. Was not that what your music said ?”

“Never was more perfect interpretation ; I played only from memory—I have never seen the notes—but that you have understood it, tells me that I have reproduced ‘A summer day in Norway.’ Once only I heard it, and feared to attempt on the piano what, with an orchestra, was both poetry and music. I cannot express to you my delight when you recognized the meaning.”

“You made my piano speak as it has never spoken before ; but, Kate,” and Mrs. Montgomerie smiled archly, “after all, it was a song of the universe, not the song of a soul.”

“And yet one is but less than the other ; both are divine, both the expression of divine power. Let us have both to-night.” And to the quaint old monotonous tune of “Allan Percy” Kate breathed out the earnest pleading for the Master’s presence :

“Abide with me ! fast falls the eventide,
 The darkness deepens : Lord, with me abide.
 When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
 Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour ;
 What but thy grace can foil the tempter’s power ?
 Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be ?
 Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless,
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness ;
Where is death's sting—where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies ;
Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee—
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."

To Kate's rich tones the soft and beautiful voice of her old friend was added, less in power, but no less in sweetness and culture. As the prayer ascended, the double offering seemed to say : "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

"I am glad you are going on Monday, Kate—a week of such sympathy would make life impossible without you. Sleep fast, my child ; it is twelve o'clock—I am too old to learn prudence, but you must keep better hours. Oh, Kate, wonderful Kate, first my old piano bursts out into inspiration, and earth's music surrounds me, then from the very altar seems to rise a prayer-song." And a loving kiss and a good-night blessing stopped the answering words. "No, Kate, don't contradict me ; I know what music is, and from whence its fire is lighted. Good-night—good-night."

The darkness passed, and then the sweet, calm Sabbath dawned. Sweeter, calmer at Burnside than could be possible elsewhere, for every member of the household was in harmony with its key-note. The dear old lady—and yet I hesitate to say "old," for nothing with which we associate age had touched her, save in a wisdom and a beauty of repose that could only be the outcome of a long life of trust—the dear old lady on this bright winter day had gone nearer than ever to the Glory Land in the extra hour of devotion which she allowed herself on the Sabbath.

A light illumined the soft gray eyes, a halo encircled the fair brow.

"Your hymn last night suggested my topic of meditation this morning, Kate," said she, as they met in the hall after the refreshment of the quiet sleep that was given to the "beloved" of this "House Beautiful." "I always take some incident of the life of our blessed Lord for my Sabbath morning hour. To-day I read about Zaccheus. His anxiety to see the Lord seemed like mere curiosity; but He who sees not as man sees recognized the unspoken love. 'Make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.' He had not even asked it in *words*. A little heart-love, a little earnest watching, perhaps a deep longing to minister to Him, and he is answered. 'I will abide at thy house.' No more loneliness with such a guest—the abiding is even unto the end of the world. 'There is no dark side to life,' said a young Christian sufferer, one day, for her sick-room was brightened by His presence."

Kate could sympathize with her friend in her religious feelings to a degree. The growth was on the same root; but one was a blossom with petals closed around the germ, the other the open flower, giving full fragrance to each passer-by.

When breakfast was over, the carriage was announced; a drive through the brisk winter cold invigorated them. A few kind words were exchanged with friends in the porch, and then they entered the little church at Brighton to hear the new clergyman.

Mr. Thornton was already in the desk, and they had hardly taken their seats when his deep tones pronounced an opening sentence of the Episcopal service. The characteristic of which Kate had heard was at once apparent—an *earnest* spirit revealed itself in every intonation.

"The Lord is in His Holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him."

A hush fell upon the people; they realized the presence of the King. This impression was not lost throughout

the services. The prayers were real prayers, and the praises real praises, to a present Lord. His tone was low and distinct ; it was heard throughout the building, and yet it seemed as if one must be listening to catch it. It was addressed to the Lord, not to the people.

As alternately, according to the old Israelitish ritual, pastor and people took up the words, Mrs. Montgomerie, who was not what her son termed "a vigorous Episcopalian," felt her heart warming in the worship, and surprised herself by her own fervency.

She always said that she preferred prayers suggested by the needs of the hour, and that formality chilled her, explaining, "that as the people of the world are set in families differing in forms of home government, so all are privileged to have different forms of worship. The holy city will have twelve gates," she would add, "though its Light is one and indivisible."

But I have wandered from the new clergyman, who for the second time stood before the Lord to lead the devotions of the congregation in the Brighton church. I use the words advisedly, for it was just that peculiarity that impressed the people. Mr. Thornton "stood before the Lord." One was taken back to the days when Moses received his instructions directly from high Heaven, and the words "according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he," seemed an explanation of every gesture. The service over, the praises were led by Luther's grand old music, and "with one consent" the pastor and people united in its harmonies. The text that followed was so in accord with the feeling pervading the whole assembly, that it was as if they were expecting the words. "And all the people said, Amen ! and praised the Lord" (1 Chron. xvi. 36). The sermon was a simple discourse on union in worship and in the acceptance of Christ's work.

Unaccustomed to hear the Gospel in Old Testament

story, the congregation listened with deep attention. On Mr. Thornton's first Sunday he had explained the unity of the Bible, and had said that he would literally follow the Lord's example when he taught the disciples on that "walk to Emmaus." The risen Lord, "*beginning* at Moses and the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." So Mr. Thornton for his first text took the words of St. Paul, which showed that these teachings "concerning Himself" were "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come : that Christ should suffer, that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

"Surely," said he, "the glorious doctrine of the Atonement will be the undisputed corner-stone of the Church, if we find it—as our Lord found it—among those wondrous revelations given when "the *Lord* talked with Moses."

But I did not intend to quote two of Mr. Thornton's sermons. One, my readers must endure, as I cannot fully describe him unless I tell of it, but these same readers can "skip it" at their option.

After the announcement of the text, the speaker paused, and again a thrill went through his audience, and each one recalled the words, "The Lord is in his holy Temple." And then without preface they were taken into the midst of one of the most gorgeous of Israel's ceremonials. It would take too long to place the reader where the speaker's clear and graphic description of the scene placed his listeners. Suffice it to say, they *stood with* the hosts of Israel, before "the tent that David had pitched for the Ark of God," on its return from the Philistines. They *saw* "the burnt sacrifices and peace-offerings," and learned how Christ was taught in Israel. And when the sacrifices were ended they *heard* the blessing wherewith the people were "blessed in the name of the Lord."

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Then they heard of the "music of the psalteries, and of the harps; of the sounding cymbals, and of the silver trumpets."

And here the immediate subject was left for a moment while they were reminded that the Lord required the best of everything from his people. "Israel's worship," he said, "ceased to be typical when in the decadence of their love they offered Him 'the torn, and the lame, and the sick.' A perfect offering only could typify the true sacrifice, and prove that the offerer understood its significance."

"At the conclusion of the services," continued Mr. Thornton, "David delivered into the hands of Asaph and his brethren a psalm which he had prepared for this celebration. Asaph," he explained, "was the chief of those whom David had appointed to record, and to thank and praise the God of Israel; and as the psalm was read that day, we can imagine the grand choruses which made more impressive its ascription of praise. The whole multitude listened with reverence to the words of their poet-king, waiting hardly for its close to shout 'Amen,' and praise the LORD."

"And this," said he, "brings us to our text, and to the two points which I particularly desire you to notice. 'All the people said Amen.' In Israel's host not one voice failed to set this seal to the glory of their God—to Israel's Jehovah, 'who was, who is, who is to come.'"

"My brethren, when will the 'Amen' which we are so often privileged to repeat come as an acknowledgment of Christ's work, and rise a mighty voice of united praise? It was thus that Israel accepted their God."

"The second point of interest is to learn to *what* the

host of Israel assented in this national "Amen," (here the psalm was read as given in 1 Chron. xvi. 8-36). "In this psalm," he continued, "we find ascriptions of praise, records of particular favors to Israel, assertions of the superiority of their God over the gods of the heathen. Especial reference is made to the worship of the heavenly bodies, this being an idolatry to which Israel was continually tempted by the surrounding nations. That the Lord made the heavens, is the unanswerable argument for his superiority over its hosts, these very gods of the people being commanded to rejoice because *the Lord* reigneth.

"A very particular reference is made to the covenants and to the future coming of the Lord. The covenants, plural because so often repeated, but one only in meaning, were to every child of Israel as household words. That the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to be a great nation, to bless and to be blessed, to possess forever the land of Canaan, and that from Judah's tribe was He to come who would rule—a king of peace—over the earth, was accepted as their faith. Earnestly are they admonished in regard to it. 'Be ye mindful always of His covenant, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, even the covenant which He made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac, and hath confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant,' were the words of the king.

"There was no lack of knowledge in Israel—priestly teachers were appointed by law. Every child knew that their fathers first received the covenant individually; that at Sinai it was received amid terrible manifestations of the presence of the Lord; and that the wonderful code of laws by which their nation was governed was then added. Every child knew that the shout of their nation's acceptance had echoed among the hills of Horeb. 'All that the

Lord hath spoken we will do,' was the unhesitating promise. Alas! they knew, too, how often Israel had broken their vow and wandered from their King. It was true that, so far, Israel's repentance had always followed Israel's sin; Israel's acknowledgment of Jehovah had always followed their denial of him. Again and again had they been forgiven, and now, after long wandering into sin, their repentance had been accepted, and the Ark of the Lord restored.

"He that dwelleth between the Cherubim once more blessed them with His presence, and in their penitence and in their joy they loved much, for they had sinned much, and the 'Amen' of the host ascended as the nation's united offering.

"Nearly three thousand years of Israel's history has been written since then. They have blessed and have been blessed. They have occupied their land and lost it. They have rejected Him whose first coming fulfilled their types and their prophecies, and brought the promised blessing to the world, and they have almost lost their hope that Christ will ever come as King.

"But the promise still stands to which the nation then assented. Israel may forget, Israel may reject, Israel may fall by the way, but the Lord fainteth not, neither is weary, and his word cannot fail. Their faith may be but a memory, but we are beginning to have an echo of David's song from the hills that stand about Jerusalem. 'Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein. Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth.'

"My brethren, shall we be silent when the universe sings his glory? Shall we be silent to whom Israel's hope and Israel's faith have become a possession? Nay! 'Let us give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his

mercy endureth forever. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, forever and ever.'

"And all the people said, 'Amen,' and praised the Lord."

When the congregation left the church that day, not a word was spoken till they were outside. "The Lord is in His holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him," was the thought of each one.

"My dear Kate," asked Mrs. Montgomerie, as they drove home, "did I exclaim 'Amen' aloud when Mr. Thornton finished his sermon? I have been trying to remember, but I was so carried away by my sympathy with Israel at getting their Ark back, and listening with them to David's sermon—for it was a sermon—that I am not sure I did not shout. Perhaps my instinctive decorum restrained me; did it, my dear?"

Kate laughed. "I must confess," she said, "that you so nearly joined with the Israelites that I was rather alarmed, but I do not think anyone heard you. What a peculiar sermon! I feel as if I had been to Jerusalem."

"And nearly three thousand years ago, too. We are going to have something new with Mr. Thornton; he rivets attention, not on himself, but on his subject, in a remarkable way; but not his preaching alone is new—he has original ideas about visiting. He refused a dinner at Brightside on the plea of preferring to visit each of the families of the parish without other guests, and asked permission to dine with them when they were alone. Louise and I were rather disappointed; we had hoped to make the new pastor a centre for various entertainments. Besides this, he has no regular study hours, having given out that he is always at the service of his people, and will see them whenever he is at home. Whether all this is youthfulness, or premature age and experience, remains to be seen."

"There is no indication of that youthfulness that makes one wish the clergy were born old, and there is a most impressive and apparent self-consecration about him, as if he could not look aside from his subject. I think he is old, and lived when David did. Surely no one but an eye-witness could have so described that scene at the tent," replied Kate.

"It was most graphic ; he has a rare gift of concentration, and a man's audience is what he makes it. He carried us with him. He shall have my prayers for his entire success. What for the afternoon ? Will you go with me to my Bible class, or wait till the evening service ?"

"I would prefer reading at home. I want to read more carefully the portion of history to which we were referred this morning. Not long ago I made a study of the Old Testament ; the wars and backslidings of the Israelites seemed to me so dark a portion of their history that I have been almost glad to forget it. But now it has a new interest. I want to read about the Ark having been at one time in the possession of the Philistines, and to look up again the meaning of the covenants. After what I have heard to-day I mean to try to picture the scenes, to study oriental imagery, and to make myself familiar with the surroundings. There is an immense deal of interesting history in that wonderful book."

"Yes, my dear, indeed there is ; and when you once grasp the idea that the same Lord who suffered on Calvary spoke from Sinai—when you realize that the Saviour who promised to be ever with us was the very Guide and Leader of Israel's host, the whole history becomes a part of the revealed life of Christ. I am glad Mr. Thornton has begun this teaching. Here we are ! and, oh, Jip—my dear little dog, I am just as glad as you are ; do try to believe it, before you tear me to pieces."

There was another side to the emotions of that Sunday ;

they were referred to in the letter written to May that evening by her brother.

"I missed you more than ever to-day, dear—I wanted your sympathy as I tried to carry my hearers back to David's time. It is such a help to be sure that even *one* is with me. There was a new face before me, a face of earnest purpose and of deep feeling. I think the soul answered to mine, and when I was rising in spirit with the thoughts of the hymn a clear, silver-toned voice rose and carried me to the gate of heaven."

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOOD NEWS.

THE next morning Kate awoke with that most delightful of sensations, an undefined joy.

It was some minutes before she could collect her thoughts and realize the altered current of her life. She had hardly felt the chill of her first plunge into the cold world before she was rescued and revived by hope. When she came to Burnside her heart was heavier than she acknowledged to herself, for, in addition to her own life-problem, she had undertaken to solve that of her aunt. She tried to forget that her father must have known, and kept from her, the condition of his sister, lest she might blame him ; but the result was a firm resolution to place her aunt's family in a comfortable position. Mrs. Montgomerie's love and sympathy made this possible sooner than she had dared to hope. She could return with a promise of a home for them all, while her place as governess would remove all anxiety for their support. More than this, Kate's faith was strengthened, and the beautiful influence of the Christian character of her hostess bore its accustomed fruit, in making a life of daily service seem easy and natural. Religion and life-work were now united in her mind as never before ; there was a day-spring in her heart, life was bright once more, and—but here Kate ceased to analyze her feelings, as she thought of the new interest with which she would study Christ's work as revealed in the Old Testa-

ment. In the midst of these reveries a cheery voice called from the next room :

"Kate, Kate, are you dreaming still? If I welcomed the 'coming, I must speed the parting, guest,' and you must be at the station at ten o'clock."

"Oh, thank you," cried Kate, springing up ; "I was trying to realize my happiness before I ventured to touch an earth that seemed so unreal."

"My dear, you are romantic ; everything is solid about Burnside ; you are dreaming still. Jip, go and say good-morning to Kate."

Jip rushed on his mission, barking loudly at Kate's door ; her merry answering laugh proved that she could be safely left to conclude her toilet.

"Your dreams are over, I see, dear," said her friend, as they seated themselves at the breakfast-table ; "you look a different being from the Kate of last week."

"I am a different Kate altogether," she replied. "I am the Kate that you have helped and comforted—I'm Kate Hopeful now."

"You are Kate Flatterer, and you shall read a page in 'Pilgrim's Progress' and see what harm Mr. Flatterer did. Remember, Kate, all my messages to Mrs. Ray ; and buy that box of blocks for the children on your way from the depot, so that you can take them in with you ; and tell Albert I will have a chest of tools for him, as I must depend on him to keep the pickets on the fences, and all the gates in order ; and give Laura and Ellie the little sachels. And, Kate, you are all to come here as soon as the furniture is sent—but you will be up again before that "

"Yes, dear friend ; for the rest of my life I will be ever going from my home to yours, and from yours to mine," and Kate threw her arms around Mrs. Montgomerie and strove to whisper her thanks and love, amid her tears of gratitude.

"I thank *you*, Kate, for the privilege of lifting one cloud, and my Master more, for both the opportunity and the power are His gifts."

"The carriage, madam," said John.

"Now, Kate, one more shawl. I cannot go with you to-day; John will go on the box and attend to your luggage. Fancy me at work at the cottage in an hour from now. Good-by. God bless you, dear."

"Good-by!" cried Polly. "Come again! Home sweet home! Carriage for the lady! Ha, ha! Grandma, come kiss me!"

A few hours took Kate safely to New York. She walked to a toy-shop for the blocks, then a street-car carried her and her packages safely to her aunt's lodgings.

Such joy over her arrival, such a loving welcome, sent another thrill of joy to Kate's heart. "What am I," she thought, "that my coming brings such pleasure?"

The rooms were truly a fearful contrast to the house she had just left; but Kate saw them through "glorification glasses" now, and wondered that they had seemed so hopelessly gloomy before.

It did not take long to tell her good news, and of the marvels that had been accomplished in her delightful visit.

"Wealth pours in upon us, aunt Alice," she said; "the place as governess at Brightside, where your old friend lives, and a salary of six hundred a year, with what we had before, and our lovely home, will be little short of luxury."

"Luxury, indeed! it is like a dream, Kate. But you *will* speak as if we were going to live upon your money. I cannot consent to be a burden upon you."

"Now, aunt Alice, everything is settled. I cannot possibly live alone. The house is engaged—do forget 'mine and thine.' I do not want the fuss of paying regular board and of making minute calculations. You may pay

half of the rent, and then I will 'provide,' as country people say. We are all one family, and our money must be used for the good of all. No, not a word. There are a thousand things to do—and, oh! my darling children, I forgot the blocks. Mrs. Montgomerie sent them."

Albert soon opened the box, and Will and Ellie were delighted with the houses and barns that their brother showed them how to build.

The trunk came, and the travelling sachels were given to Laura and Ellie, and the message to Albert about the tools. Nothing could have pleased him more, for he was an incipient carpenter, and many of their present comforts were owing to his ingenuity.

Kate had to repeat again and again the description of the house—to tell of the piazza, and of the railing to be around the roof; of the garden to be made in the spring, of the flowers to be planted, and of the thousand coming delights.

The poor woman in the back room was nearly frantic with curiosity at the joyousness, the coming and going, and the evident signs of happiness. It was not long before she learned a portion of the story, and with her native kindness, offered her services to aid the preparations. Kate insisted on her being employed as far as possible, so that she and her aunt could have time for other arrangements.

The rest of the month of January passed quickly. Mrs. Ray's last debt was paid, the children's clothes were made more suitable for their new home, and Kate's deft fingers were never idle in this service. Her five trunks contained materials for many useful additions to the wardrobes of her aunt and of Laura, who, after resisting for a while, finally yielded, and as Mrs. Ray laughingly said, "Kate's gifts are not a shower, they are a tempest; resistance is vain."

"Give up the idea of gifts," replied Kate. "I am only working for the common good. Help me, dear aunt Alice ; don't try to thwart my poor little plans."

And so it was decided that they should make Kate happy in her own unselfish way.

Twice she went to Burnside and the cottage to plan and arrange for their moving. Mrs. Montgomerie succeeded in perfecting her introduction of "water privileges," and in adding a safe railing to the roof. She also painted and partly re-papered, putting on the children's room a marvellous variety of birds and flowers, so that wherever they looked some brilliant effect of plumage or gorgeous bloom would delight their eyes.

Kate's furniture seemed to grow in size and quantity, for what was but little in a large house proved a great addition to so small a one. The parlor was left untouched till the summer, but with what was sent from Mrs. Ray's rooms the rest of the house was made comfortable, so that in February all was ready.

The journey was safely accomplished, and a new world opened to the little ones, as full of new interests as the changed life to their elders.

Burnside was never more hospitable than on the day of their arrival : so many blazing fires, such floods of sunshine, such dazzling surroundings of snow-covered lawns, such screams from Polly and barks from Jip, seemed to the quiet children from the city like a Fourth of July celebration.

At first they were dumb with amazement. Polly exclaimed : " Bless your dear hearts, I'm so glad to see you. 'Scat, Jip—ladies to tea," and Jip adopted the whole party at once, scrambling all over the children, and kissing their unresisting little faces to his full content.

Laura was the first to recover her senses, and gathering up her charges, swept them off to the room which John

told her was intended for them. They were soon composed, and washed and dressed, and told that Jip was not to kiss their faces under any consideration ; that they were not to put their fingers in Polly's cage ; that they were dear, good darlings, and should go down presently.

Albert rushed out in the snow, almost beside himself with delight at liberty. He ran, he jumped, he made snow-balls, he shouted.

James looked on for a while with amazement, then called him to the stable, and did his best to entertain him, but could hardly understand his admiration of everything, and his hurrahs !

"I 'spec' you neber seed much country afore, Mars'r Ray ?"

"Not for years and years," replied Albert. "We have been shut up a good deal, and I feel as if I never had really breathed before. Hurrah !" and he sprang over a fence and ran till he was out of breath.

"Well, I neber did !" exclaimed the sable coachman as he looked after him ; "it must be drefful good to feel like dat."

It *was* dreadful good, and Albert remembered that first day for years.

In the library there were more quiet but equal signs of enjoyment. Mrs. Ray did not hesitate to speak of the change as a release from what was almost an imprisonment, and in no measured terms expressed her gratitude.

Of this Mrs. Montgomerie would not hear, although she thoroughly enjoyed those who, when they were happy, did not hesitate to say so.

"Your aunt is lovely," she confided to Kate ; "I fancied her one of those statuesque beings who seem surrounded by a cold moonlight."

There had been a very calm acceptance of her former position by Mrs. Ray, but she had some difficulty in pre-

serving her composure under the present changes, and was thoroughly alive to the comforts. There was no "cold moonlight" about her now.

"Where are those dear children?" exclaimed Mrs. Montgomerie, when dinner was announced. "They are all to come to the table; Kate, find them."

They were found up-stairs, quietly amusing themselves beside Charlotte—the maid—and were a little frightened at the summons to dinner.

"You need not be quiet; talk if you want to, and run anywhere. To-morrow Henry and Mary will come to play with you. Where is Albert? I must have everyone," said their hostess, leading them to the dining-room.

Albert had returned to the house in a very demoralized state of costume, and was hastily repairing damages in his room. He soon came down, apologizing in a manly way, by giving the true reason for his delay, which much pleased Mrs. Montgomerie.

"I forgot everything but my freedom," he said; "please excuse me to-day."

They were soon so entirely "at home" that the little ones found their voices, and not only enjoyed their dinner, but a grand frolic after it, during which Polly chose to be contemplative. Nothing could induce her to speak. She gazed at them with her head on one side, as if she were solving a problem.

At last the weary little heads were laid on their pillows.

"I'm not tired, mamma," said gentle little Ellie, as she returned the good-night kiss—"only tired of holding up my good times."

"I'se a seepy 'ittle boy, and de lady in de tap is de nicest lady I ever did see," was Will's comment.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW HOME.

WHEN they were all assembled at breakfast, the day after their arrival, Kate said : " You must let me have it all my own way to-day, aunt Alice. I want Laura to go with me to the cottage, where there is still a few hours' work, and we will be ready for you all by four o'clock."

" Had you not better dine here ? " said Mrs. Montgomerie, heartily sorry to part so soon with her guests.

" Thanks, kind friend, but we must go some time, and I think we had better begin our new life at once. Nora is waiting for us. Will you not dine with us instead ? "

" Not to-day, dear. By the by, Kate," as she followed her to the carriage, " John has put in a basket to help with your first dinner. No, no—it is nothing. I will come and see you to-morrow. Don't try to walk over while there is so much to do."

Kate and Laura drove off, followed by the admiring eyes of the children, who considered their cousin as a sort of fairy godmother, and Laura as at least half illuminated by her magic power.

" Kate, this is perfect," exclaimed Laura, when they reached the little gate and ran up to the porch. " It is like a doll's house ; but so beautiful, and in such a lovely situation ! "

Nora met them with her smiling face, in haste to tell of how much she had done. The fires were made, the lamps

were trimmed, and she already waiting for more work. At this encouraging account Kate instructed her about finishing the rooms, while Laura was exploring the new home.

"You and Ellie in this room," said Kate, joining her, "Aunt Alice and Will in this one opening into it; and see the long windows, with the piazza-roof for a playground."

"If a piazza is under that, it must be like a room."

"It is. I forgot to show it to you. Sixteen feet square—the most absurd thing for such a house that you can imagine, and for summer, the most delightful. We will have vines twining the pillars, and hanging baskets, till it is a flower pavilion."

"Kate, it is like fairy-land; and this room—this is a flower pavilion already, and aviary, too."

"Yes, the flower-and-bird paper is lovely. Mrs. Montgomerie chose that for the children. Now come to my room—she *would* paper it with rose-color. This is my own furniture, you know, dear. It looks rather fine in this small house. Albert is to sleep here in the hall room. His bed nearly fills it; but he has a good closet, and a table by the window."

"Perfect everywhere. Now I must unpack the trunks. I want to put all mother's things in the drawers for her. It will not take long," she said, laughing.

Kate went below, while Laura arranged drawers and closets as she thought her mother would like them; then Albert's possessions were also cared for—even a place found for that heterogeneous mass of odds and ends that is so necessary to the happiness and well-being of every boy.

The trunks were emptied, and with much screaming and laughing the three girls dragged them up into the tiny attic.

"Here is another room!" exclaimed Laura.

"That is for a future cook, my dear—some creature of Mrs. Montgomerie's imagination. But don't wait any longer ; we have the china to make the best show of, and the dining-room to finish. I believe Nora has the kitchen in perfect condition."

"Yes, indeed ; do come and see," said the child, who had worked like a little woman.

The fire burned brightly in the stove, the dresser was in order, the tins shone like silver ; the long towel in the roller, the ice-box just outside of the door, with butter and milk on its shelves, and the basket John had brought on the table.

"It has dinner in it," said Nora, who was much pleased with the commendation she received ; "it will only have to be warmed up. I know how to do it."

"Laura—look ! A pair of chickens roasted, sweet potatoes, cranberries, apple-sauce, oyster-plant, and a pudding ! I wonder whether Mrs. Montgomerie ever forgets anything ?"

"Kate, what is this closet ?"

"A little waiter's pantry, with water hot and cold, heated by the stove. Is it not nice ? And the china closet here, and here the drawers for the table-linen."

"Oh, Kate, may I do all this kind of work ? You are to be teaching, you know."

"Yes, dear ; work seems like play now, everything is so fresh, so small, and so convenient ; and, Laura, I am so happy I don't know how to show it," and here Kate burst into tears.

"My dear, precious Kate, I am glad that you only cry because you are happy. Don't, don't, Kate !" and Laura put her arms around her cousin.

Kate struggled with her tears, and between laughing and crying, they managed to set the table for dinner.

Everything new and bright, for plated ware is as bright as silver, and new glass, even if not cut, can send off stars of

light, particularly on a snowy table-cloth. They put the lamp in the middle of the table, ready to be lighted, the two high chairs for Will and Ellie; they drew the curtains, looked again to see if the wood-box were full, and then sat down to think about it.

Everything was ready; Nora was making a success of the dinner; the little mantle-clock chimed four, all was prepared.

"I feel as if I had to light a match to touch something off," said Kate.

"The hall lamp!" exclaimed Laura, laughing. It had been forgotten, but was soon lighted, another lamp put on the staircase, the dining-room lamp lighted.

"I hope everything won't disappear," said Laura. "There they are!"

"Home, aunt Alice!" said Kate, kissing her and the cold faces of the children.

"Hurrah! this *is* jolly!" cried Albert. "Kate, you are just the dearest, best girl in the world."

"Oh, don't, Albert; come, let me show you your tiny room." Kate ran off up-stairs, while Laura was taking care of the others.

Albert followed.

"There, dear boy, can you get in this little place? Albert, don't say anything about me; I haven't really done much. It all just came out exactly right. I am as much surprised as anyone. Don't let anybody thank me; you have all helped, you know, and nothing would have been done but for Mrs. Montgomerie."

"I know; isn't she a brick? Don't be worried, Kate. Let's have our dinner—I hear we are to have one. I'll talk for everybody!"

"Dinner, Miss Kate, please," said Nora.

"Whew!" cried Albert; "how many servants do you keep, please, madam?"

"This is only a temporary one!" laughed Kate, who found smiles and tears equally easy.

The dinner was very gay, thanks to Albert and the children. There was much to tell of Burnside, and of Henry and Mary from Brightside, who had passed the day with them.

Mrs. Henry Montgomerie had also been to see her old friend, Mrs. Ray, and early associations and pleasures had been pleasantly recalled, with a high-bred ignoring of the cloudy part of life.

After dinner Mrs. Ray and the children were introduced more carefully to their new possessions, but Ellie and Will were too sleepy to see much. Their little brains were soon reposing, while the elders of the party discussed their plans of life.

"I am afraid, dear aunt, that the only share I can take in housework will be the care of my own room, as I will be at Brightside from ten until four o'clock every day except Saturday."

"I do not wish you to do anything here, Kate; you are our man of business——"

"Thank you; but I would rather feel that I help a little in all departments. My money has been nearly expended in furnishing and moving, so that yours, with my salary, will for this year be our only dependence; we must, for the present, do the principal part of our own work."

"That will be easy," returned her aunt. "Do you remember some one giving the definition of a heroine as 'an educated woman doing her own work?' Just now I cannot see hardship or self-denial in it. When one is working for loved ones, for the little ones whom the Master loved, it is His work."

"Yes, when we only *think* about it; but I fear the actual making of fires, for instance, and cooking of dinners, may weary one after a while. Then—cleaning a saucepan!"

"Oh, Kate, Kate, I always feel like laughing when you go into practical remarks; flowers and laces, poetry and music, seem your fitting surroundings; then, to hear you talk of a saucepan is fairly comical."

"It is one of our womanly privileges to be inconsistent. I see the same oddities in you, my stately aunt. When you were broiling our steak one morning I thought of Marie Antoinette playing farmer's wife."

"Nonsense; I am an old worker. But this is play-work. I feel as if I had reached Mount Méru—when

‘One oppressed, oh, joy! hath found a place of rest.’

Not idleness, Kate—a want of occupation is not rest. By the by, Louise Montgomerie proposed that Laura and Albert share your instructions at Brightside; it will give stimulus to them all, and will be a great help. But we must break up our late talks. Let us sing of ‘His loving kindness’ to-night, dear."

As soon as possible after their settlement in the cottage, Kate began her duties at Brightside, finding them much more pleasant than she had dared to hope. Her charges were bright and intelligent, and so much delighted with their new governess that in their effort to entertain her they were in danger of forgetting they were pupils.

For some days regular lessons seemed impossible.

"There is so much to explain before we begin," said Mary.

"And if you do not know about Carlo, and Frolic, and Browser," added Henry, "of course you cannot understand how important it is for us to have a recess every now and then, to see how they are."

Kate consulted Mrs. Montgomerie on these unexpected interruptions, and was advised to submit to introductions to the animals, and to sympathize in the care the children took of them. The result of their education, she thought,

would not be affected by it. Kate found this worked very well, for when the little brows were knitting over some mighty mathematical problem, or when some distracting geographical complication of rivers and towns bewildered them, a run to the stable with sugar for Frolic, or a race with Carlo, disentangled all knots.

After Laura and Albert joined them, the stimulus of companionship gave new life to study, and to the happy Brightside children the school hours became a sort of festive occasion. The number of recesses was reduced, and even their governess found her duties too pleasurable to be called "work."

If my story were not to follow "Jim" and his fortunes, I would tell of how the pale faces of the city children grew fresh and ruddy, and how each day was looked for with hope, and then passed into a pleasant memory. It was the gift of Burnside to add joy to every life that came within its charmed influence.

In the new home Mrs. Ray and her two younger children found constant occupation. They were soon strong enough to play out-of-doors, to enjoy the old mill, under the kindly care of John Brace, and above all, Nora Herndon's monkey.

Little Will's only trouble was the fear that he had not found all the play the day might possibly have had in it, and Ellie—the thoughtful child—as she gave her good-night kiss, whispered :

"Do you think heaven can be nicerer, dear mamma?"

And then Mrs. Ray leaned over her little girl and told of joys of which earth has no parallel. It was unwise, perhaps, for the eyes grew too bright for mortal child, and the brain was wrought to too high a tension.

"How soon can we go, mamma?" reminded the mother that Ellie needed weights rather than wings.

"Not till we have done some work for the dear Lord

here, my darling. You must grow to be a strong and useful woman first, and while you are a little girl you are to help mamma every day."

"Please to get through with me soon, mamma. Good-night, dear."

"Was I wrong, Kate?" asked her aunt, when she joined her niece. "If I am not utterly truthful to my children, how can they learn faith?"

"A good play to-morrow will bring Ellie back again," Kate replied; "but I think she needs more physical than mental exercise. Never fear, dear aunt Alice, that your children will not learn faith and perfect trust. I have wondered whether sceptics had good and true mothers."

"It seems to me that faith should never come to a man as a new mental exercise. The trust in a Divine love is easy to one who has a memory of an unfailing human love—and," added the speaker, growing eloquent with her subject, "when a mother wonders where her son learned scepticism, where he learned to question every faith, let her review his early years and see if she fulfilled the high behest of being for him an example of unflinching truth. Let her see if she has given him one stronghold of faith on which he could rest as on a rock."

"Faith should have no memory of a beginning," said Kate.

"We have wandered from Ellie," said Mrs. Ray. "Her childish trust needs only to be protected amid the storms of life. But it is late—good-night, dear."

There were many such conversations between Kate and her aunt, and the children reaped the benefit of their united care.

Between the families of Brightside, Burnside, and the cottage there was constant intercourse, and even the rigid social rules of the new pastor were not opposed to joining the family gatherings. Kate became a member of his

church, although the chapel was so much nearer to the cottage that Mrs. Ray and the children went there. Her lovely voice was soon the leader in the choir. Such music had never before been heard in the little church, for the spirit which Mr. Thornton infused into the services was followed by the music, as if one soul inspired both. The sympathy of his choir was a greater help to the young clergyman than he fully understood. He felt it, but without realizing how important it was to him, and when both he and his people sang praises that were almost jubilant, or in low tones rendered their petitions, they felt the influence, without recognizing the exquisite taste that adapted either to the reading and the sermon.

To Kate, harmony was a necessity, a roughness an impossibility. Her daily tones were modulated so that they seemed to say as much as her words, and when she had opportunity to minister in a sick-room her presence was a refreshment, greater than the good things she offered.

Even Mrs. Ray could not soothe her highly organized Ellie, as Kate could. The little one listened to her as if it were a revelation to the baby soul, and when her cousin sang, the unearthly brightness of the always beaming eyes told of a vision of the spirit-land. She would hold her mother's hand with a close grasp, but fix her eyes on her cousin, as if she were communing with her inner life.

It sometimes frightened Mrs. Ray, but "Sing, cousin Kate—sing to Ellie," was such a longing cry that it was vain to resist it.

Not only in voice, but in dress and all appointments, the same harmonious nature was apparent, and Kate's presence anywhere became synonymous with restfulness. She was urged to unite with all the social entertainments of Brighton, but her father's recent death, and her daily occupations, formed excuses of which she was glad to avail

herself. The informal gatherings of the families were more to her taste, and in them she and Mr. Thornton constantly met. The grave young clergyman did not disguise his interest, but the lookers-on failed to discover by word or sign that to Kate his presence added any charm to the hours the friends passed together. Her superb voice was as readily raised when Mrs. Montgomerie was the only listener as when her pastor stood beside her in rapt attention. Kate's heart was apparently safe.

CHAPTER XIV.

SARAH DUFFY JUST MISSED IT.

One evening in the early spring Kate was dining with her friend at Burnside. According to their custom, after dinner they were enjoying the flickering flame of the library fire. The lamps were not lighted, and the friends were talking in their own restful way. Kate would sometimes sing a quaint, wild song ; sometimes, with her head resting on the arm of Mrs. Montgomerie's chair, tell her own beautiful thoughts. She was quite still for a while.

"Are you asleep, dear?" asked the elder lady.

"No, indeed ; I was recalling this"—and then in a low voice she carolled a melody that seemed to have caught its beauty from the far-off land of light and song.

"Will we not speak in musical numbers hereafter?" she asked.

"Certainly—I think so ; it seems to me that a *perfect* expression of anything is musical."

"Dear friend, what 'perfect expression' of anything is possible here?"

"Pardon the personality, but what is wanting in that last song?"

"Now you are parrying my question ; we were not talking of what some master-mind has already made into music, but of daily conversation."

"True ; and perfection is of course to us an abstract idea, but an approach to it is melody."

"I am glad you did not say 'harmony,' for I feel that

cannot be reached till we are tuned to heaven's key-note. A friend of mine said an odd thing one day—she was an invalid, and suffering from the weariness of long illness. We were speaking of the words, 'There shall be no night there,' when she exclaimed: 'I cannot fancy complete rest without night; I want a night in my heaven!' I had no sympathy with such a feeling; 'night' means to me *darkness*, and absence of light fills me with horror."

"And I cannot fancy a heaven with a night, in which no man can work. My idea of heavenly joy is unfailing strength for unending work."

"What! never peace and rest?"

"*Always* peace and rest. The work of love in which I hope to be employed hereafter will have none of the uncertainty of work here; it will be without competition or weariness."

"May I sing to you a few lines which were suggested to me by my friend's idea? The music is also mine."

"Never ask me if you may sing, Kate; I can answer in the words of the old song once for our whole lives—

"Sing away—sing away by day and by night."

Kate's words were these—the music I cannot reproduce:

Wherefore night, when none are weary;
Wherefore night, when none need rest;
Why should hang a pall so dreary
O'er a land with radiance blest?

Wherefore night, when none are sleeping;
Wherefore night, if day can last;
Why a cloud to hide our weeping,
When the time for tears is past?

Wherefore night, when none concealing;
Wherefore night, which hides no sin;
Why a dread of day's revealing
Where our Lord hath entered in?

"You have given the thought very beautifully, Kate—certainly there will be no need of night in our future life."

"The words are simple, but I am glad they give the idea. I love a star-light night—then the darkness seems pierced, as the child said, with gimlet-holes to let the glory through. It is darkness, Egyptian darkness, that terrifies me." And Kate shuddered.

"You foolish child! you remind me of some of the children's speeches. Mary was 'not afraid of the dark,' but objected to it because she could not 'tell exactly what was coming;' and one glorious night when the moon seemed to make the larger stars more brilliant the saying of the child about the gimlet-holes was repeated. Harry exclaimed, pointing to the moon: 'I think an angel must have put his foot through there.'"

At this moment Jip, who had been asleep, barked a gentle welcoming bark. "Someone is hanging a coat on the hat-stand, Kate; do hear Polly's incivility," said Mrs. Montgomerie.

"Scat! go home! What are you doing out so late? Is every place shut up? Go to bed. I'm tired with your noise."

"Oh, Polly, what have I done to be so treated?" remonstrated Mr. Thornton's voice as he entered the library. "Please forgive me," he said, "for waiting till the song was concluded before I announced myself. I came just as it began, and as I did not dare to move till it was over I heard also about the moon and the stars while I was taking off my coat. Now that I have confessed all, am I forgiven?"

"I will forgive you fully and freely, though yours was confession without penitence!" laughingly answered Mrs. Montgomerie. "As to Kate, you will have to make a separate peace with her."

"Miss Acton, was I wrong to wait until you had fin-

ished? Was it not simple civility not to interrupt you?"

"You were quite right on general principles," replied Kate, blushing very unnecessarily.

"You would have heard a sketch of your early life had you been detained longer. I was about proposing to tell Kate some of the incidents which have come to my knowledge. Perhaps you will tell us yourself now—I believe it is not a private history."

"I will tell you with pleasure, if it will at all interest you. There is quite a little story of God's care connected with my early life, which has been made so public by my grandfather that I need have no hesitation in repeating it. He made what is called a 'Sunday-school book' of it.

"My earliest recollections are of a home in England—as I recall the very shadowy memory, I think an English parsonage; then a period of my father's illness; then a journey to Liverpool, a small inn where I remember that my father was robbed, and where he died; then a voyage, and a coming to a strange land. This is all very dim. I recall privation, and then a room in a tenement-house in New York, which came to seem like home, when my mother and little sister were there. My mother sewed for our support, and as soon as I was able I assisted her by selling newspapers, and by such other occupations as a boy can find. She often spoke of taking us somewhere as soon as we were better clothed; but she died suddenly, and had never told me any particulars about ourselves, or where we were to go. I had a general impression that we had relatives who would take care of us; but the world was wide and strange, and I knew not where to find them. The daily need to provide for my sister and myself soon made me cease to wonder about uncertainties. I continued to make a support until I was taken ill; then little May, in her despair, went out to sell my newspapers.

She wandered into a church, where she heard the preacher give out the text beginning, 'Come unto Me.' The child thought he was calling her, and insisted on going to him.

"He was interested in the little waif, and went with her to see her sick brother. The result was, that he opened my father's Bible to read while he was watching me. His own handwriting revealed the fact that we were the children of his only son."

"Oh!" exclaimed Kate, whose face was lighted with an extraordinary interest. "And his name was Thornton, and I heard that sermon—I do not remember anything but the text, and a beautiful child sitting on a bundle of newspapers. *Was that—could that have been your sister?*"

"The comparison of dates will settle it," replied Mr. Thornton, trying to steady his voice. "It was twelve years ago."

"Exactly," said Kate; "and the Ascension Church. I——" She stopped in confusion.

"You gave the little child an ermine collar," he said, with intense emotion. "She has it yet. How wonderful this is!"

"Most wonderful," said Mrs. Montgomerie; "you must be the best of friends hereafter."

Kate moved away from the fire, which, she said, burned her face; and Mr. Thornton continued:

"We were taken to the home of our grandparents, where we knew no more trouble. I entered the ministry, and for my first year helped my grandfather. I am now in my first parish; my sister remains at home."

"Can she not come to us for a visit?"

"Thank you, my friend; our grandmother is blind now, and when she puts out her dear white hands, if they did not fall on May, she would indeed feel deserted. My sister cannot leave at present. The separation is hard for us, but cannot be avoided."

"You have interested us extremely, but you have made your story short."

"Naturally. It was about myself. May I tell you about Sarah Duffy now?"

"Is she better and happier?"

"She is. Her life has been a strange history of one who failed in everything."

"Poor, unfortunate woman!"

"Pardon me, dear madam—would not earnestness and forethought have changed her whole career?"

"But, Mr. Thornton, do we not often fail just as we nearly gain an object?"

"I would be sorry to agree with you, Miss Acton; but surely, if we are permitted nearly to gain our object, it must be our own fault if we fail. Let me tell you about Sarah's failures: they will illustrate my meaning. When left dependent on her own exertions, she lost the place of district school teacher by putting a letter of recommendation in the mail too late. She tried sewing, but it was never done well or in time. Her next effort was to raise poultry; but regular feeding was too much for her—they died of neglect. She became engaged to be married, but her preparations were not completed at the time proposed—the wedding was deferred two weeks. During this delay her lover took cold one evening when Sarah's fire failed to burn—he died of pneumonia after a short illness. She watched him till the last day; then, her clock having run down, she was too late—he died just before she entered the house."

"How perfectly absurd!" laughed Kate. "Has she missed anything else?"

Mrs. Montgomerie joined in the laugh, exclaiming: "Tell her, Mr. Thornton."

"She missed her footing," he resumed, gravely, quite unconscious of a jest. "A plank was broken in a little foot-

bridge opposite her door ; she failed to step over it—a broken leg was the result. She then delayed sending for a physician until it was almost impossible to set it, and now in her illness she says she is ‘real discouraged.’”

Kate could not control her mirth, but tried to ask with proper composure :

“What can you do ? Can you mend the broken links of such a life ?”

“But little can be done with these habits of negligence, but I will strive to keep her from missing the future help she so greatly needs.”

“Kate, we must agree with Mr. Thornton that a more earnest purpose would have saved Sarah Duffy,” said Mrs. Montgomery.

But Kate had seen the ridiculous side of Miss Duffy’s career too strongly to be able to repress her amusement, and Mr. Thornton’s exceeding gravity, although it made it a necessity, rendered her incapable of a reply. Fortunately, John entered with the tea-service, and Kate hid her laughing face behind the urn.

The Burnside entertainments were always without formality ; and after John had assured himself that he had done and brought everything that could possibly be needed, had put on more wood, and signified to Miss Acton, by laying his hand upon the bell, that he would be within call, reluctantly left the room. Kate filled the little cups, declining Mr. Thornton’s assistance in handing them. “You forget I am a bachelor, and know all about tea,” he remonstrated.

“I remember you are a guest,” said Kate, hardly daring to trust her voice, “and I am at home, you know.”

“Entirely and always,” said Mrs. Montgomerie, adding, with a look of amusement : “I would like Mr. Thornton to be at home here also.”

“Thank you, but I am afraid of Miss Acton,” he said,

with the faintest gleam of mischief passing over his face.

Kate glanced a surprised look at him.

"Afraid of *me* ! "

"Yes," he answered, bravely. "I am never quite sure of how you will receive any proposition I may make. I would not dare to say this if my firm friend Mrs. Montgomerie were not here to defend me."

"I am sorry I am so alarming," she returned, partly vexed and partly amused ; "you need never fear that I could shadow, in any way, the hospitality of Burnside. This is the 'House Beautiful,' you know."

"And in it," returned Mr. Thornton, quoting Bunyan's description, "is 'music in the house, music in the heart, and music also in heaven, for joy that we are here.'"

The tears were in Mrs. Montgomerie's eyes, and she took up the parable, adding : "When they had supped, they ended with a psalm." She looked at Kate, who never failed in a response. In a moment the three thankful hearts were offering their united praises in the words :

"When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view,
I'm lost in wonder, love, and praise."

There was a pause after the hymn ; no one spoke—but Polly ! In distinct tones she called :

"Good-night. Go home ! "

Kate was feeling as if smiles and tears were equally near, and this sudden break into their rather overwrought condition was too much for her—she began to laugh again.

Mr. Thornton rose hastily. "There is no help for it," he said ; "Polly reminds me that I have already made a long visit."

"No, no, it is early," exclaimed the hostess, rather shocked at both Polly and Kate.

"I must go," he said, gently. "May I escort you to the cottage, Miss Acton?" In fact, "Jim the Parson" was saying very loving words, in his heart of hearts, to this changeful Kate, and longed that she might hear them; but Kate took alarm at the look of entreaty that accompanied his request, and hastily answered:

"Thank you, my evening is not half over."

The young pastor took his leave. When he was on the piazza he looked at his watch by the light from the window. It was nearly ten o'clock. "She has made it very plain," he sighed; "I am never to see her alone."

"I did not behave well," said Kate, with a sigh that the spirit of the air took as an echo to the one outside; "but he has such a way of looking at me as if I were a problem."

"Are you quite sure you are not?" asked her friend, smiling.

"Quite. It was rather embarrassing to have given that collar to his sister. I did not realize it at first. Then his solemn description of that ridiculous woman—it was too much to endure. I am very matter-of-fact—no problem at all."

"Yes, dear, *very*; as much so as a star, for instance; you do your part in the great universe, steadily and truly, but you twinkle and wink, and hide behind clouds, and come out again—and——"

Kate put her arms around her. "Not another word; you are the most fanciful being I ever saw. Now tell me plainly whether you do not think Mr. Thornton might laugh occasionally?"

"I think a glint of a smile that passes over his face is the most perfect expression of appreciation I ever saw."

"You are non-committal to-night; come, drive home with me."

"The evening is not half over," was the answer.

CHAPTER XV.

SHE WILL AND SHE WON'T.

Summer came—bright, beautiful summer. Roses covered the porch, and vines climbed the arches of the “grand piazza.” The flower-decorated tea-table there, with its fruits and white rolls, and the fair young girls who served in this Arcadia, made Mr. Montgomerie talk of Mr. Phœbus and his Greek Isle, and Mr. Thornton think hopefully of the coming Feast of Tabernacles. There being no road past the cottage, no passers-by disturbed their privacy, nor were there servants to comment upon a phase of life they could not comprehend. Between the parlor and the stream Kate had raised a mound of flowers. Everything that was richly scented she planted there, surrounding the delicious odors with a border of heart’s-ease.

“I love to see their darling little faces looking at me when I come to say ‘good-morning,’” she explained; so the flowers turned to her with a smile as she cared for their health and comfort, and opened their eyes to watch her coming. To Mr. Thornton her morning service in her garden seemed as attractive as her evening song of life in the flower-pavilion; for before as well as after his parish duties he usually went to the cottage, under a vague impression that a family of ladies might want something. Mrs. Herndon and John Brace thought the need was on the pastor’s side; but people will talk, you know.

Kate had ceased to object to his gravity; the “glint

of a smile " was full remuneration for her liveliest moods ; his puzzled expression was becoming interesting. To him she was still a problem : he saw a rounded and beautiful character, a strong purpose, and a Christian life ; and as he contemplated it with an expression of which Kate could not guess the meaning the merriest and most musical of laughs would fairly startle him. " I wish May were here," was his hopeless thought. There were times, however, when Kate was serious, and many an earnest conversation helped them both. He called her " Kate " now, when they were alone, and she no longer avoided him. It vexed her occasionally to hear the village gossip which connected their names ; but she did not feel obliged to give up her friend because busybodies called him her lover. She had heard all the missing incidents of his early life, and she and May were regular correspondents ; the affair of the ermine collar had lost its embarrassments, so that during the summer the young couple became very well acquainted, " considering."

In the autumn Mr. Thornton was summoned to the death-bed of both his grandparents. They had served the Master together for fifty years, and together they passed the gate, and entered the glory-land. All that was theirs on earth was left to " the children," excepting a provision for Sarah and Richard. These faithful servitors had some time before united their work and their fortunes. It was accomplished with characteristic brevity and straightforwardness. Richard said, one day : " We've got to live together, anyway ; don't you think it's easier pullin' in one yoke ? "

The wise virgin who had secretly adored Richard for twenty years, and sewed for him for love, gave no evidence of her elation. She said, composedly :

" I ain't pertickler. If it's best, it had better be. Jest as you say, Richard."

" Well, I say it's best."

"Very well, I'm willin'," which direct assent closed the courtship. One afternoon, after the house was "redd up," Richard put on his Sunday coat, and Sarah her new alpaca, and they were married. One endowed the other with his worldly goods, and the other sedately promised to obey. After this they took a walk in the graveyard, then returned and "got tea" as usual.

Sarah wondered a little if it would have been different if she had been younger, and Richard had one—promptly suppressed—memory of a blue-eyed girl who was a matron then. These two thoughts constituted the romance of their wedding.

And yet—as I think it over—was there no romance, as Sarah ever afterward tenderly protected the alpaca from spot or stain, and brushed the Sunday coat with a sort of reverence? Was there none in the feeling of pride with which Richard came to look upon his stately gray-haired bride, and the way in which he called her *wife*?

The offer of the vestry to buy the parsonage was declined for the present, and Richard and Sarah left in charge. "Let everything stand as it is—the music-book on the organ, the knitting on the sofa, and the Bible open. Only dust them, Sarah, till we return."

Then May accepted the invitation to go to Burnside until her brother could find a suitable house. She thought she knew how Jip would bark, and how Polly would scream, and how the dear hostess would be standing on the piazza to welcome her. But May found that neither words nor letters had told her how she would be folded in loving arms, and how peace and rest would enwrap her like a garment. No words could tell how care fled from a household where all were of one heart and one mind, nor how smooth was the path from which the presence of the "Lady of Burnside" removed all stones. "How I ever lived without you two girls," exclaimed the old lady, "I can-

not imagine ;" and May wondered that life had not seemed incomplete before she knew this "House Beautiful."

About half a mile below the cottage, farther down the stream, and just before it reached the Sound, was a grove of pines. It was a favorite resort of Kate in the hours when she needed the recreation of solitude.

One Saturday morning she betook herself to this spot to gather cones, and supposed her object was to prepare for instructing the children in cone-work. When her basket was filled, she threw its contents, one by one, upon the glittering water. She was given to soliloquizing, and inquired of herself why she had done this.

A voice beside her answered :

"I have not the faintest idea ; your work has been fruitless, Kate. I heard you were gathering cones, and now they are floating on the stream."

Kate did not start : she knew that she expected him—she did not seem surprised that Mr. Thornton answered her, but moved a little that he might sit beside her.

"I was watching them float down the stream ; they will land on some island, and another pine-grove will spring up ; then some poor sailor will be wrecked, and find shelter there. Nothing is lost, you know ; everything does its work."

"Yes ; but some work is of more avail than your future grove. Was its planting your object ?"

Kate laughed a low laugh, but made no reply.

"Nor was the cone question mine," he continued. "I have sought you this morning, Kate, to ask that you will be my wife. Not only to make my home an Eden, but to stand by my side in the life-battle. I will not tell you of green pastures and still waters, for we are here to struggle for the right ; but I will promise not to take you where we cannot find the shelter and the shadow of the great Rock. Will you come, Kate, with me and little May ?"

His hand was held toward her ; she laid her hand in his.

“Stop a moment,” she said, for he was about to consider that the gift of Kate’s hand was the gift of Kate’s self. “My promise must be for a distant future. My heart you have long had unasked. I will not take it back. I cannot be your wife, dear James, until my present life-work is done. Can you trust and wait?”

“I can trust you, Kate, more easily than I can wait for you. What work is there that we cannot do together? and whose life-work is done till life is over?”

“You cannot help me in mine. Aunt Alice has told you of the state of destitution in which I found her ; but she has not told you that during the years of her poverty her own brother and I were living in luxury. She will not accept direct gifts of money. I can only help by being one of the family, and by putting my earnings in the common stock. I must see her future assured before I can leave her.”

“Do you propose to support them till the children are married or settled in business?”

Kate laughed at the gravity with which this stupendous question was asked, but made haste to control her mirth when she saw the expression of wonder with which she was regarded ; for after all Mr. Thornton’s study of her character he had failed to discover what so often made her eyes dance amid the gravest of life’s questions.

Kate soon replied earnestly enough to satisfy even this most serious of lovers.

“It is my solemn duty to remain until Laura can take my place ; until then——”

“You and I must live apart,” added Mr. Thornton, drawing her to him as if apart had no meaning.

“Will you trust me, James?” she asked again.

“Trust you? Yes, forever ; but can you not give me some certain end to my probation?”

"And if I do—if I say five years—suppose I am ready before that, shall I come and say so?"

"Yes," he said, simply, "to-morrow, if you can ; or rather, I will come every day, and say, 'Are you ready, Kate?'"

The tears came in Kate's eyes at this perfection of truth and trust, and her life-work looked long and weary.

"You were mistaken in one thing, my own Kate," he continued. "You did not give your love 'unasked.' I have asked for it every day since the first one on which I saw your earnest eyes in our little church."

"The day you preached that wonderful sermon on the 'Amen' of Israel?"

"My text was, 'And all the people said Amen and praised the Lord.' Your heart joined mine that day ; I felt as if I heard its throb. Did you know what mine said to you?"

"No, I was struggling with my own."

"Then afterward, when those grand old psalms were sent above by your winged tones ; when, no matter what has been the subject of my sermon, you have found a way to intensify it, did you know that my soul had found its mate?"

"No, no, James ; not till this summer."

"Long ago I would have spoken, but with the words on my lips, I have turned away before some merry joke of yours, and told myself I was mistaken. I do not know you yet, Kate ; I fancy I have fathomed half the mysteries of your beautiful soul, and then you bewilder me again."

"When you have 'fathomed' the other half, and I am your prosaic wife, you will wonder at your idealization of an every-day character."

"Once my wife, Kate, the whole mystery will be my daily joy. Now I must go. Remember, as soon as you see a release, you are to tell me. Meanwhile, in so far as

we can find happiness in our knowledge of a love *for both worlds*, we will accept the boon."

The birds heard the last whisper, and saw the seal that was put upon the vow ; then Kate was alone with her new joy, and—

"The beating of her own heart

Was all the sound she heard."

As soon as released from some pressing parish work, James Thornton went to his sister with the story of his disappointment.

May took a very consoling view of the subject.

"I love her better than ever, Jim. We will have the brightest home in the world ready for her. Think what it is to have the love of such a woman—of one to whom duty is first. She is intended for you, dear old Jim—do not be discouraged."

And "Jim" was not discouraged, for his condition had many ameliorations.

The parish, through its various society mouths, was graciously pleased to signify its approval of the engagement, though by degrees its length received condemnation.

"What keeps that Kate Acton back beats *me*," said the head gossip ; and she never found out.

With the "Lady of Burnside" there were many confidential talks ; yet even her desire that everyone should be happy without delay could not combat Kate's decision, nor her determination that her aunt should never know why the marriage was deferred.

The only argument to which any force could be given was, that Mrs. Ray was placed in a false position.

"Kate, she would do anything on earth rather than accept this sacrifice from you."

"I know it," quietly returned Kate ; "and therefore she must never suspect it. She would return to the exact po-

sition in which I found her ; for I see that no effort on her part is possible to obtain support. She does all the work of the house, and all the sewing for herself and four children. She scarcely allows herself a glance at a book ; she buries her various accomplishments ; she visits only here and at Brightside."

"My dear, can it be possible there is so much sewing?"

"In comparison to what was needed before, the increase is tenfold. The children are strong and well, except Ellie, and the havoc the two boys make of their clothes is amazing. When new clothes cannot be procured, the mending of old ones is weary work ; besides this, she teaches the two little children. I cannot entirely explain why I consider her a sacred charge—you must bear with me till I feel my duty accomplished."

And Mrs. Montgomerie ceased to urge the matter, loving her young friend more truly than ever.

Even Mrs. Ray innocently urged the marriage. The question of finances did come into the widow's mind, but several modes of increasing her little store seemed feasible to her, although her niece considered them impossible, such as teaching a small school, or taking someone to board in Kate's pretty room. Never for a moment did she imagine that Kate was putting aside for her every dollar she could save, and striving to educate Laura so that she could procure a situation as a teacher.

"Why do you not begin your preparations?" she asked, one day. "There is something pathetic in the look of patient devotion that Mr. Thornton wears. Every possible hour is given to you, and May is almost as devoted."

"We have no idea of being married yet," Kate replied, "and I don't need any particular preparation. We will make up our minds some day, and have it all quietly over with, settling down into old married people before you have time to think about it."

"You unromantic child, I wish I could tell why you feel as you do. Are you sure you love him? He is so grave, and takes such a serious view of everything—perhaps you will weary of being kept up to such a height of solemnity."

"I will never weary of *him*, dear aunt Alice. I am very sure that I love him. Please do not ask why I wish to delay longer. We are very happy, and I am sure I do not interfere with his work in any way. *Indeed*, I have a good reason."

"It's like a long preface to a good novel," said her aunt.

"Except one great difference—in this case I find the preface very interesting, and mean to read every word of it; the novel is more uncertain," laughed Kate.

The refreshment of all was sought at Burnside, for there were sometimes wearied spirits in overworked bodies that needed the complete rest to be found only there. Kate and May loved to open the door whose latch-string was always outside and be welcomed as only the "Lady of Burnside" could welcome them.

"Oh, May! my spring-time, my bird of promise! and Kate—'bonny Kate, my super-dainty Kate!' I cannot tell which of you I admire the most—as styles of architecture simply, I mean," and the old lady would hold them at arm's-length, as if the problem were too deep for her.

Many others found it equally hard to solve; for May, with her golden hair and dark eyes, and sunshiny expression, contrasted strongly with Kate, tall and fair, a very queen of women, with dark-brown hair in heavy rolls crowning her beauty.

"The difficulty about you, Kate, is that you were intended for a stately, impassible woman, and yet every emotion shimmers and dances in your eyes. You are a very contradictory person, my dear. Now, as for May, one understands her at once. I think it very unkind in you

to be so different. How can I at my age adapt myself to you both ? ”

And so the old lady made merry with her young friends, proving that, as had been said of her—the spirit has no age. It was ever sympathizing, ever stretching its wings to some needy soul.

There was no loneliness in Mrs. Montgomerie's life ; giving all and asking nothing, she had her reward in “ full measure, pressed down, and running over. ”

Mr. Thornton's rule of visiting only in a strictly social way was at last understood. He claimed the privilege of sitting at the table with any of his parishioners at whose house he chanced to be at their hours of meals. When they comprehended that he wished no changes made for him, and that he took his tea at a farmer's table as often as at Brightside or Burnside, the satisfaction of his people was very great. They were quite willing to yield some of their claims to Miss Acton, but their pastor did not ask even this.

His work was no sacrifice—it was his first love. “ You are second only to this,” he told Kate.

So the winter passed ; the pastor labored unremittingly, bringing his people nearer to the life of faith and trust of which his was so beautiful an exponent, while Kate and May, in loving rivalry, gave all possible help in the feminine branches of parish work.

One of Kate's little pupils, who was a very executive young person, said to her mother :

“ I am glad they are going to be married ; everybody said they ought to be ; but Mr. Thornton is so *unthankful*, I was afraid he would neglect his duty. I was going to tell him about it. ”

“ I am glad you did not,” said the rather alarmed mother, “ for if he did not think of it, it was best not to remind him. ”

"But, mamma, he forgets things for himself, you know, and papa says it's his duty to take more care of himself."

Mrs. Montgomerie left her little girl's ideas to be corrected by time, and she and Kate laughed heartily over the neglected duty.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. HOGEBOOM.

Then another summer came. The happiness of her aunt's family was Kate's reward. Mrs. Ray knew she was helped by Kate's sweet companionship, but did not guess how much by her daily labor; for Kate always professed to want whatever she saw needed by the others. One evening she was alone on the porch, wishing for the time when she might answer Mr. Thornton's daily question affirmatively. But, oh! the money accumulated so slowly.

"I wish you were a great nugget of gold, and would drop at my feet," she said to the moon, which was sailing overhead with cool indifference. The man in the moon, overhearing this rapacious remark, proposed to his queen to deck the young lady in a silver robe. A molten flood was poured upon her, and she was so beautiful, dressed in the silver gift, that the imprisoned man was fain to hide his eyes behind a cloud.

"Why did that envious cloud come?" exclaimed the unconscious object of his adoration. "I was just learning a lesson of hope from the spreading of the glory over every bush and tree. I cannot be hopeful in the dark."

Then Kate *looked up*, and the queen of night recognized the silent homage, and threw upon the passing cloud the colors of the bow of promise, so that it lost its darkness, and wafted away among the stars, soft and feathery as an angel's wing.

"I accept it," said Kate, "you beautiful rainbow-tipped glory. I *hope!* I *hope!*"

An earthly sound called her from this rapt frame of mind—the rattle of the one livery carriage of Brighton. It stopped with a clatter which seemed as if it must be its last.

"Here we be!" exclaimed the voice of the owner of the establishment.

"Very good," replied a solemn voice; "is this the residence of Mrs. Ray?"

"'Tis, or I wouldn't have brought you here. Somebody is on the piaz'; go ahead!"

"Ahead" he went, in measured steps, and in stately tones asked to see Mrs. Ray. Kate ushered him into the cool summer parlor, half lighted by the moon and half by a shaded lamp; then, forgetting clouds, rainbows, and angels' wings, exclaimed, as she found her aunt—

"Come down, Aunt Alice; Trask has brought the grim-mest man you ever saw!"

"What does Trask mean? Excuse me to him, dear."

"No, indeed; it is very important. I know he would not have come for any small matter."

"Kate, you frighten me to death! he may be crazy. Stay close by the door, to call Trask."

"I don't fancy listening; there may be a secret——"

"Then I won't go down—promise you will stay."

Kate promised, and Mrs. Ray went to her guest.

"Mrs. Ray, I presume;" he bowed stiffly.

Mrs. Ray bowed assent, and waited further light.

"I am a lawyer, madam. I have had much trouble in finding you; my name is Hogeboom, madam."

"I was not aware you were seeking me, Mr. Hoge——"

"*Boom*, madam," he exclaimed, explosively.

"Boom!" returned Mrs. Ray, flustered with alarm, and the consciousness that Kate was laughing.

“Hogeboom, madam, is my name!” (indignantly).

“Hogeboom, I mean, sir. I mean, Mr. Hogeboom, pray sit down.”

The rustle of Kate’s dress, as she fled to the porch, made her aunt incoherent. The lawyer looked daggers at his hostess, who made an effort to recover herself, explaining :

“One who has lost as much as I, Mr. Hogeboom, must be pardoned for alarm at the sudden appearance of a lawyer.”

“I was naturally unprepared for exciting alarm, madam. I have come to announce the death—a month ago—of your husband’s brother.”

“Our papers come irregularly ; I regret I did not see a notice of it.”

“It took place, madam. I cannot suppose it will be a grief to you. You have never seen him ?”

“I have not. My husband wished to take me to Cuba, but trouble, illness, and his death prevented.”

“Will you oblige me by stating, if possible, madam, your husband’s reasons for not applying to his brother when in monetary troubles ?”

“He wrote twice ; but receiving no answer, he supposed he was unwilling to assist him.”

“The letters were not received, madam. My client, C. E. Ray, felt much aggrieved when he learned that his brother had died and left his family in comparative poverty.”

“Actual poverty,” said Mrs. Ray.

“Actual poverty, I regret to learn, madam. ‘Comparative poverty’ were the words of my client.”

Mrs. Ray bowed.

“He wished to offer the help so proudly unasked.”

“Not at all, Mr. Hogeboom ; my husband wrote twice.”

“The letters, I have stated, were not received. With your permission I will proceed, omitting the repetition of

the offensive words. Failing to discover the family of his brother, my client could only suppose they were wilfully secreted."

"Oh, what a mistake!" exclaimed the much-tried listener.

"Madam, *will* you allow me to proceed?"

No objection being made, he proceeded:

"My client finally learned the residence of the family in a so-called tenement-house. He sent a lawyer, to find that they had removed. The failure to trace the erratic movements of his brother's widow was reported."

Mrs. Ray held up her hands in despair.

"My client was taken ill. He made a conditional will. You are doubtless aware he had no heirs. His life was devoted to his estate. This is what in Cuba is called an *hato*, or a grazing farm. He was successful in both Durham and Devonshire breeds, through his skill in cultivating Pará grass, which has been introduced into Cuba. How to dispose of his accumulated wealth became—in view of his impending death—of importance."

Mrs. Ray could think of no reply to this self-evident proposition, so she bowed again.

"You follow me, madam?"

"I do," returned Mrs. Ray, "with much interest."

"Naturally, madam. My client's brother's children are his natural heirs. His will—a subject of much thought to my client and myself—I will here state we were personal friends" (Mr. Hogeboom enjoyed the suspense of his listener)—"his will, as I have stated, was conditional, the whole property, real and personal, being left to the children of his brother, William Albert Ray, subject to a specified life-rent for the widow, in case the family should be discovered within five years. If, after that time, they were still in undiscoverable seclusion, other disposition to be made of the property. To me he intrusted the charge

of finding his heirs. I have passed two entire weeks, madam, in seeking your residence."

"I assure you, Mr. Hogeboom, I had no idea of secret-ing myself. My whole income was three hundred dollars a year. The strictest economy only enabled me to support the family on this. I could not continue any social relations; I became a hard-working woman, and by degrees was forgotten. Life in a great city is reciprocal; no one was unkind—I was only left to myself. Our removal to this lovely home was through the efforts of my own niece, who shares her small income with me. If it had not been for this, you would have found me in my poverty."

"I am happy, madam, that a portion of your widowhood has been passed in comparative comfort. You will now be able to choose any residence you desire. I will place four thousand dollars in your hands to-morrow for immediate convenience, after which your own life-rent and a proper sum for each child will be sent quarterly." At this statistical announcement, proving the entire sanity of the visitor and the inexpediency of calling Trask to eject him, Kate left her post and ran to the little kitchen, where Laura found her preparing a delicious supper. Recklessly she was destroying the next day's dinner to make a chicken salad, and wildly opening preserves intended for the winter. Laura was in alarm at these proceedings.

"What is it, Kate?" she exclaimed; "is Mr. Thornton here?"

"No, indeed; it's Jason with the Golden Fleece. Cut the bread, dear, while I press the butter into a pineapple."

"I believe you have lost your mind, Kate; who is the man I hear talking?"

"A Mr. Hogeboom; oh!"—and she stopped to laugh—"don't call him *Boom*, my dear."

"Why should I say Boom, if his name is Hogeboom?" asked Laura, half offended.

"Forgive me, dear ; you will know all soon. Now the table looks lovely ! No ; some roses around this dish—and *candles—candles*, Laura ; how can you be so plebeian as to place a lamp on a supper-table ! Now look your loveliest, and in your most distinct and dulcet tone invite Mr. Hogeboom and your mother to supper."

Laura was thoroughly mystified, but went with the invitation.

"Kate—cousin Kate—who's having supper and good times down-stairs ?" called Ellie, as her little white-robed figure appeared at the landing.

"Everybody ; and if you go to bed and leave your door open you can hear all we say ; and after a while I will come and tell you about it."

Which disposal of the young lady showed Kate's wisdom. The usual soporific given to inquiring children, that "It is nothing ; be good and go to sleep," generally has the effect of arousing all their energies to discover the hidden secret. In this case, Ellie lay down to listen, and was asleep in five minutes.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Ray had fully satisfied Mr. Hogeboom as to her appreciation of this most unexpected good fortune, and also invited him to remain at the cottage. This he declined, but accepted Laura's invitation to supper with wonderful alacrity for such a dignified personage. In truth, he was aching for another glimpse of the young lady who stood on the moonlit porch.

Kate at once proceeded to fascinate him by the most careful utterance of his name, thorough respect for his mission, and by her devotion to his creature comforts.

He pronounced the salad "exceedingly well compounded ;" the bread, "light, madam, as any ever made in my former client's well-regulated household ;" the butter, "worthy of our own dairy, taking the liberty of using the pronoun 'our,' madam, because I was in some measure a

partner of my former client in the importation of Devonshire cattle."

The supper was a success. Laura by degrees became enlightened as to the good fortune that had fallen to their share, and as Mrs. Ray recovered her equanimity there was no difficulty in so accommodating themselves to Mr. Hogeboom that he thought he had rarely met such refined and elegant women.

Kate excused herself for a moment while she ran through the flood of moonlight to give the impatient Trask a portion of their good fare. It quite consoled him for so late a detention; he rarely gave his approval or his time to anything after nine o'clock, generally leaving the guests of a party to walk home. "No use talkin', tain't my way—me and the critters don't go in for turnin' night into day." His supper mollified him—perhaps the "fair spirit for his minister" had some effect. As Kate walked back to the house she did not forget the little cloud clothed with a rainbow that had seemed to her so hopeful early in the evening. "How grave James would look at my superstition if I told him of my having felt it to be a good omen," she thought.

It was eleven o'clock before Mr. Hogeboom released the impatient Trask, and the "critters" received less than their usual attention that night, for their master was "*that* beat out there warn't no use in livin'."

The next day Mr. Hogeboom laid before Mrs. Ray—"the widow of my deceased client's brother"—a certified copy of the will, and paid into her hands "such ready money as my late client had left."

"It will be necessary for you, madam, to assume the garb of mourning, I presume?" he said.

"If you do not particularly request it, I would rather not," she replied. "I dislike to wear mourning unless my feelings require it. In this case I have no personal feeling ;

I am deeply grateful to my husband's brother, but one does not wear mourning for gratitude."

It was Mr. Hogeboom's turn to bow, for he had nothing to say to this. There was something so above "shams" in the bearing of both ladies that he concluded not to refer to the custom, in such cases, of grading the expression of mourning in an inverse ratio to its feeling.

Kate earnestly hoped the lawyer would not consider it necessary to withdraw the "ready money" of his client because her aunt refused to become a perambulating pyramid of crape and bombazine.

Fortunately, he did not, but, giving her a copy of the will, informed her that her life-rent in the estate was four thousand a year, and the annual allowance for each of the children, during their minority, one thousand. The rest of the property was to be left to accumulate under his care until the youngest child should be of age. If either of the elder ones married before that time, special proviso was made that the portion might be received on the wedding-day. Mrs. Ray was appointed sole guardian of the children, and the "ready money" proved to be five thousand dollars for immediate expenses.

A check-book was brought with much ceremony by Mr. Hogeboom, and he was prepared to suffer much in his efforts to make clear to Mrs. Ray the mysteries of payments and deposits, and those kindred subjects which, with most women, produce softening of the brain.

He was greatly relieved at the calm and intelligent composure with which she received his instructions, and concluded that her education had been "regarded with more than usual care."

The lawyer was not quite so grim as he seemed, and had much secret satisfaction in the hospitality with which he was entertained, compared with his first frightened reception by Mrs. Ray.

I regret to say that he even ventured to fancy what his bachelor home might be if graced by such a fair being as Kate ; and as far as he was able, he relaxed his stiffness when speaking to her. Fortunately, Mrs. Ray recognized these dangerous symptoms, and hastened to speak of the approaching marriage of her niece. Mr. Hogeboom sighed audibly, and shortly after hearing this melancholy end to his imagined romance, left Brighton, promising to make all other arrangements by letter.

CHAPTER XVII.

KATE GIVES ADVICE AND TAKES OTHER THINGS.

"Kate, Kate!" exclaimed her aunt, on the day after the lawyer's first visit, "I cannot understand it. I did not know that I cared to be rich again. I am ashamed of the thousand wants and wishes that this prospect gives me. Things I had renounced forever come to me already like the very necessities of living. Is it quite impossible to conquer self? Can one never quite forget the luxuries of independence?"

"Don't try to analyze your feelings, dear Aunt Alice. There can be no wrong in taking, and taking thankfully, and in using whatever is necessary in restoring the old habits of your life. Your own education can now be an enjoyment to you. You can gratify those beautiful tastes that you have so conscientiously crushed. Your children can have the benefit of your education, and of your daily companionship. They will no longer be in danger, as you have so often feared, of thinking that how to make one dollar do the duty of two is the chief end of life. What a long speech I have made! But, dear, I so missed a mother's care that I half envied your little ones when they gathered around you in your one leisure hour at twilight."

"Oh, Kate! and I so restless lest I ought not to take that hour of leisure! I wondered why you so insisted on it."

"Did I? I did not know it. But I have thought, and I suppose acted unconsciously on the conviction, that a mother's untrammelled interest in her children is a duty to them. I mean that there ought to be a time—a children's hour—when they can take the lead in conversation, when they can be certain that mother has nothing to do but to listen and to sympathize."

"Yes, I know, Kate ; when 'ways and means' are put aside, when even the click of knitting-needles does not come between the childish thought and the mother's heart. I can remember climbing on my mother's lap, feeling that there only could I hold her hands and have her attention—for my dear mother, you know, was never idle."

"And is not this undivided interest one of Mrs. Montgomerie's charms? Her son came in one day exclaiming: 'You dear, idle old darling, I do so love to feel that I can talk without interfering with anything.'"

"But, Kate, she is not idle!"

"No, indeed ; that very day, after Mr. Montgomerie had gone, she was not unoccupied a moment, and when I spoke to her about it, she said: 'I always make it a duty—as it is a pleasure—to give my boy my undivided attention.'"

"Kate, you are dreadfully wise for such a young girl. I never thought out this subject before, but I see now how different my intercourse with my children can be, now that I am relieved from daily work."

"Yes, indeed ; fancy your lovely walks and drives, and how you can make all the beautiful things that you love as household words to them."

"I must take back my words of a week ago. Do you remember how you ventured to reprove me, my dear, when I said that I regretted not having learned washing and ironing instead of languages and literature?"

"I remember ; I told you never to regret any acquisition, and that you were not too old to add washing and

ironing to your other accomplishments," replied Kate, laughing; "but now I doubt whether your education will receive this finishing stroke."

"It most certainly will not. I shall bound back to my old life with mortifying eagerness; I feel self-condemned a little, even after your wise words."

"Mine may be the fancied 'wisdom of inexperience,'" returned Kate. "I have already lived long enough to have discovered how much easier theory is than practice, particularly in a woman's daily life. All one's best plans for a day may be annihilated by a refractory cook, or by an unreasonable visitor."

"Yes," said her aunt. "I began my married life by mapping out every hour and every duty; now I can be amused when I recall my daily self-reproach at 'nothing done'—at the hours, as I then thought, frittered away."

"One's ideas change, as a view does, from different stand-points. Duty is a convertible term. I learned a great deal while at Burnside. Mrs. Montgomerie would sometimes at breakfast give me her plan for the day, and at night I once asked her—for I had watched its non-success—how far she had accomplished it."

"Dear old lady! What did she say?"

"She said her 'plan' was only to fall back upon in case there were no more immediate calls of duty. Her hours of reading and study were only to be so used if no one needed her help—her first duty was always to help those whom the Master sent to her, and that she never considered time lost when she could either sow seed or care for the tiniest growth in the garden of the Lord."

"But how could she be sure she was so doing?" asked Mrs. Ray. "Fancy an hour of gossip about dress!"

"I don't think much of that sort of thing enters the charmed circle of Burnside, for in view of such danger Mrs. Montgomerie keeps the helm of the conversation."

It is possible, however; and I know she would in such a case sympathize with her visitor, so that the next time she would feel that she was coming to a friend, and perhaps be surprised to find herself interested in topics of which she had never thought before."

"We can always learn from her, Kate, and I shall ask for some of her stores of wisdom in my return to my old life."

Kate laughed. "If you ask in that way you will silence our friend. She says she has no particular rules, but only asks every day for help, and then does whatever her hand finds to do, in the best way she can. She once told me she learned a great deal from Monckton Milne's poem on the "Worth of Hours." Let me repeat it :

'Believe not that your inner eye
Can ever in just measure try
The worth of hours as they go by.

'For every man's weak self, alas!
Makes him to see them while they pass
As through a dim or tinted glass.

'But if with earnest care you would
Mete out to each its part of good,
Trust rather to your after-mood.

'Those surely are not fairly spent
That leave the spirit bowed and bent
In sad unrest and ill-content.

'And more, though free from seeming harm
You rest from toil of mind or arm,
Or slow retire from pleasure's charm.

'If then a painful sense comes on,
Of something wholly lost and gone,
Vainly enjoyed or vainly done;

'Of something from your being's chain
Broke off, not to be linked again
By all mere memory can retain—

‘Upon your heart this truth may rise :
Nothing that altogether dies
Suffices man’s just destinies.

‘So should we live that every hour
May die as dies the natural flower,
A self-revolving thing of power.

‘That every thought and every deed
May hold within itself the seed
Of future good and future need,

‘Esteeming sorrow—whose employ
Is to develop, not destroy—
Far better than a barren joy.’

The last four verses are those she oftenest quotes, they explain what the poem taught her.”

“They are most helpful words, and I will remember them in my children’s hour. And now one more word before we separate, and it is a Medo-Persian decree—one-half of all I have is yours, to have and to hold from this day forward.”

“Thank you—thank you, most generous of heiresses—but I am going to leave you soon, and have no need to carry off any plunder.”

“Soon, Kate! When? Only a week ago you told me you had no idea when you would be married.”

“I had not then, but I have changed my mind since.”

“Kate! It must have been to-day. I see it all now; you dear, generous girl! You would not leave me to my small income. Oh, why did you do this? I had not the slightest idea of it—I would not have permitted it—I——”

“Please do not make so much of it. I could not have been happy in any other way. It was a delight to me to feel that I was able to determine your future. Laura would soon have been prepared to take my place as a

teacher. She and I have planted good seeds carefully in many an hour; they will come up the strongest kind of 'things of power,' and you know, dear, you would not have accepted any other help?"

"Hardly. And now, when?"

"The seventeenth of July."

"My child," exclaimed Mrs. Ray, "you have nothing ready."

But Kate was ready, and Mr. Thornton was ready. The subject of trousseau she refused to consider.

"I can buy clothes when I need them," she said; "and the idea of spending the precious two weeks with dress-makers is preposterous."

In this emergency Mrs. Ray consulted with Mrs. Henry Montgomerie, and the two ladies were absent for several days in the city. It was so fitting for some of the abundant money to be spent in the great metropolis that no questions were asked.

Kate declined to send any orders for anything. She had all she wanted, and all she needed, and what did a poor clergyman's wife want with finery; so, charging her aunt not to buy anything for her, except some plain white crape for a wedding gown, Kate followed her usual pursuits. Of these, flowers and music always formed a large part.

One day, during her aunt's absence, she was standing on the piazza, wondering at the marvellous beauty of earth and sky and fleecy clouds. Soft perfumes filled the air, and all nature seemed ringing with the "Joy Hymn."

"Joy, thou spark of heavenly brightness!"

sang Kate, hardly recognizing her own bird-like notes amid the orchestral tones of rustling leaves and feathered songsters—

"Joy, all living things are drinking."

She paused a moment ; then, as the thought of the source of all joy filled her heart, she went on :

“ High above yon azure folds,
Shines a Father's star pavilion.

“ Oh, Beethoven ! ” she exclaimed, “ marvellous high priest of Nature's worship, was it inspiration that suggested the hush that sometimes falls on earth while the voices hymn the song of prayer ?

“ Now on bended knee, ye millions,
Feel ye your Creator near.”

Kate sang again and again these snatches of Schiller's song, wondering, as she heard her own rich tones, whether the music best interpreted the words, or the words the music. Once more she began :

“ Joy, thou spark——”

“ The birds have stopped to listen,” said Laura, putting her arm around her, noticing the very hush that Kate so enjoyed.

“ Nonsense ! ” replied her cousin, coming down with a rush ; “ they always stop at dinner-time. Let us go to suffer the vagaries of our cook. Cooks, my dear, are one of the penalties of luxury. Don't for an instant hope ever again for those delicately browned potatoes that your mother's skill prepared for us.”

“ Kate, I came to listen to you, not to call you to dinner. Your moods are like Trask's work ; he said yesterday : ‘ A streak of lightnin' can't get 'round some days fast enough to please folks. ’ But as you are on earth again, dinner is ready.”

“ I thought so,” laughed Kate, as, bringing down a

shower of rose-leaves from the vines on the piazza, they entered the cool and shaded dining-room. The children had a thousand things to say, to which Kate considering it her duty to listen, the vagaries of the cook passed unnoticed.

They were to go to Burnside after dinner ; all the children were invited, so that there was a great deal for the little ones to think about.

"How soon will you be ready, cousin Kate?" asked Ellie.

"As soon as I can scramble into a fitting gown," said Kate, going upstairs.

"Laura! where is my gray silk? I am sure it was hanging in this closet!"

"Wear white this warm evening," said Laura, who knew that the missing gown was in the hands of a modiste. So Kate thought no more of the subject. Her toilet never troubled her, partly because it was impossible for her to own anything not in good taste, and partly because she was more careful for others than for herself.

It was a delicious evening. A group of chestnuts on the Burnside lawn gave a heavy shadow, and in its coolness John served the iced tea and fragrant strawberries. There were seats and tables under the old trees, and tea there in summer was another of the Greek isle entertainments.

Mr. Henry Montgomerie and his children had preceded the party who came from the cottage under the escort of Mr. Thornton.

The children rushed wildly to their play-house on the little island in the river, where Charlotte took charge of them, leaving "our family," as the hostess called the elder ones to their quiet enjoyment.

It was one of those intensely hot evenings when but a slight breeze stirred the leaves and a slumberous haze

rested on the river. An evening too warm for the usual animated conversation ; but, with chairs placed wherever they could catch a breath of air, they enjoyed one of those rare periods of social intercourse when thoughts need few words to give them expression, but seem to be known and answered by inspiration. No guiding thread wove its line of direction through the conversation—each one ventured the fancy of the moment, as sure of a safe landing as if it had a spirit-guided lamp.

We have all enjoyed *somewhere* such intercourse, when all was harmony and sweet accord, perhaps in our past—a *memory* ; perhaps in our future—a *hope*.

The twilight lingered long ; Kate and Mr. Thornton wandered off ; the late moon was rising, when Mrs. Montgomerie, calling the little ones, proposed finishing the evening on the piazzas.

May went inside to sing for the children, while Mrs. Montgomerie continued her conversation with her son. "Those girls are quite a study of hearts," she said ; "May so unselfishly happy in her brother's prospects, and Kate so calm and yet so joyous. I never know with what to compare her. A sunbeam is too trite and too steady in its shining."

"How would a summer shower do?" replied her son, laughing at his mother's dilemma ; "you can add the rainbow that follows it."

"Your comparisons are no better than mine—no one thing alone is like Kate," she said ; "but May is all that her brother is not ; she completes what is wanting in him—that problem is easier. They are coming—Kate gleaming in the moonlight like Una in the 'shady place.'"

"May," she said, "will you come with us and walk back with James? Mr. Montgomerie promised to drive the children home. We have had a lovely evening, dear," and she kissed her old friend in her loving way.

Polly was roused, and sleepily besought them to go home and be quiet, concluding her advice with, "Polly, you're a jolly ole dolly, a jolly ole doll—joll—doll—ole dolly, jolly dolly," and then she was asleep again.

On the walk, Mr. Thornton experienced one of his bewilderments. Kate had been gentle, calm, lovely, and responsive ; now the mood was over, and there was no limit to the merry badinage of the two girls.

"By the pricking of my thumbs," laughed May, "I know you will perpetrate a joke some day, Jim."

They had just explained one to him.

"Impossible," he replied ; "and I cannot imagine what your thumbs know about it. However, if it is suggested, I will say it."

"It would be a poor joke if you had to go meandering around after it. It must be inspiration, Jim—inspiration !"

"I doubt if I will ever be happier than I am in listening to you and Kate ; but what, in this contemplative evening, induces you both to talk as you do, I cannot imagine."

"We are supplementing the contemplative evening," replied May ; but the Reverend James was not enlightened by this. The cottage was reached, and Kate left standing on her vine-draped porch.

The warm days continued, and Kate did not look for her missing gown, so she was very naturally surprised at the gift from Mrs. Ray of an entire trousseau. I wish to represent Kate as above the wild enthusiasm shown on the dress question ; but truth obliges me to state that the inconsistencies of her character were as evident here as in other points. She expressed her delight in a choice selection of those extreme exclamations of admiration which dress alone inspires. You may be sorry, but so it was.

There are those who would have deferred the marriage, rather than omit the preparations ; so Kate may be par-

doned, when we consider the importance of the matter is so great that young girls have married for the sake of the trousseau, accepting the husband as a key to a chest.

Mrs. Ray's gift was but the beginning of a torrent of articles of possible or impossible value, to testify the love of the people for their pastor. Among the unique selections was a tame crow from a crippled child, white mice from a lame boy, a pair of rabbits, a Newfoundland dog, a peacock from a farmer's wife, and various articles of furniture from those who made them.

One afternoon Kate was at the future parsonage consulting with May, when the hardware wagon drove up, adding a snow-shovel and garden-rake to all the other things.

The boy who brought them dragged a mouse-trap from his pocket, presenting it with much shyness. "'Tain't much, you know, but mother says they're dreadful handy to have in the house."

Kate thanked him with a becoming composure, rather hard to retain during May's cough.

"May, I entreat!" exclaimed she; "do not make it harder for me; our presents are so remarkable, I cannot keep my face straight."

"The mouse-trap is just what we want," she returned; "we can experiment on the crow and white mice; it will save poison. Here is Job Beers with something else."

"Please, sir," said Job, "I'd like to give you sumfin', an' I hain't nothin' but my billigut."

"Your—what, my boy?" asked Mr. Thornton.

"My billigut; he is real good in a sled. I know you'd be kind to him;" and two red fists were screwed into two equally red eyes.

"My dear boy, perhaps you had better not part with your—your—what is it?"

"He ain't no *it*—he's a *he*," nearly sobbed the boy. "He's a real beauty, too."

"Don't cry ; I will be very kind to him—but is he a dog?"

"No—a *billigut* ! Didn't you never see one? There's billiguts, an' there's nanniguts. Nanniguts gives milk, an' billiguts don't."

May's cough recommenced, but Mr. Thornton rose to the occasion.

"Yes, yes ; I understand. I am very much obliged. It is so good in you to make a sacrifice for me. Now, suppose you keep him for me ; it will be a great favor. Then when I want to use him in a sled you can drive him for me—will you not?"

"*I reckon !*" said the delighted boy.

"I will have to trust you to buy the food for him, and will pay you for keeping him ; here is a dollar ; you must keep an account of how you spend it."

A happier boy than Billigut's former master could not be imagined. It had been a hard struggle for him to give up his only pet ; but Mr. Thornton had been very kind to him through a long illness, and the boy wanted to show his gratitude. This happy turn of affairs was a great puzzle to him as he thought it over.

"I gived him tew him, an' he tuk him ; an' I'se got him, an' he's got him ; I'm to keep him, an' he's ter have him—it beats all natur' ! He's to pay the feedin', so there won't be no more blowin' 'bout that. I won't take no money for keepin' of him ; that 'ud be meaner than pussely. It's a kind of double-fisted, double-barrelled bargain ! I don't see it right clear ; it's jest like the parsin—when he touches a thing, it's all right."

As he disappeared, May explained to Kate, who had no idea what sort of an animal was under discussion. "A goat, my dear ; I knew 'billigut' in a minute ; it took me back to my early experiences on Third Avenue. Both a billigut and a nannigut resided in a yard in that distin-

guished locality. I had to let Jim find out for himself ; his expression was delicious."

"It was a good thought to make the boy keep it ; perhaps we can dispose of the crow and the mice in the same way—we certainly have too many animals."

"Rather," said May, dryly. "And before any one sacrifices some pet rattlesnake or sea-serpent on this matrimonial altar, you had better go for your walk."

Even Mr. Thornton's gravity succumbed to the necessities of the situation, and their walk was a merry one. Kate pictured their making parochial visits in Job's sled, with their two-horned steed, and had a thousand comical fancies for the use of the other gifts. It was impossible that afternoon to make any arrangements for the ceremony ; Kate was not in the mood. Fortunately, there were two days yet ; and on one of them the "conspirators," as May called all concerned, planned the whole affair so that there could by no possibility be any mistake.

"You know, Jim, it would be dreadful if you married the wrong person, or if Kate endowed you with *her* worldly goods ; do be patient while we instruct you." So the chief actors listened to all directions—and went off for a final walk, forgetting they had heard them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"TILL DEATH US DO PART."

Of course, in a story like this—a simple detail of everyday life—the wedding-day was clear as crystal. It was just warm enough, and just cool enough. Of course, the birds, Kate's nearest relatives, were wild about it all; they flew around in the merriest way, resuming the whirlwind of song which they had dropped, as usual, after the fireworks of Independence Day. It all began over again, and the "old, old story" was sung from "five o'clock in the morning" until the last stroke of the wedding-peal died away. Of course, the church was hung with flowers and delicate perfume, till "Araby the Blest" could have been no more fragrant.

As for Kate, she passed the morning in her room, sitting by the open window, thinking of past and future, sometimes singing in a low voice to herself. When the clock chimed eleven she began her toilet.

The crape gown was put on in a half-revery, but the wonderful reflections of the mirror on the subject recalled her to herself.

Aunt Alice appeared at the right moment to arrange the cloud of tulle, which, falling around her like a dream, gave the requisite air of mysticism to the pure and beautiful costume.

And then Mrs. Ray took her farewell. "My darling, my darling!" she exclaimed—"my home angel! Kate of

my consolation ! what you have been, and what my life must be without you, no words can tell. May every blessing be upon you !” Without waiting for reply, she hastened away, and there was no more time for thought, as the carriage drove up, and Kate, calm, fair, exceeding lovely, met Mr. Thornton in the hall. The effects of crape and tulle were unknown to him ; he started as if he had seen a vision. She held out her hand ; its touch restored his senses, and the answer to one whispered question made all real again. But from that moment he kept his eyes upon her with the unconscious fear that in some way she would escape him. He told her afterward that he could not overcome the feeling until she was in her travelling dress by his side.

The church was crowded to its utmost capacity, hardly a pathway possible up the aisle ; but at last they stood before the altar, and in a few solemn words were made “ man and wife.”

Then the organ pealed out in joyous music, and the pastor and his bride turned to the people and stood while all present came to shake hands and offer congratulations.

When this was over, they walked down to the carriage, where stood “ billigut ” and his master, who was raised to a region of bliss by Kate’s stopping to pat the goat with her daintily gloved hand.

“ I know’d she would,” exclaimed the boy. “ Ain’t she a stunner ? It’s his’n,” he explained ; “ hers and his’n. I keeps him for ’em.”

They drove to the cottage, where was a family collation, over which, with all their efforts, there hung a shadow ; for although Kate was to live among them, each one felt they had resigned something that they could never have again.

The travelling suit took the place of the wedding gown, farewells were said, and then James and Kate began their new life.

“ Kate,” said her husband, when they were seated in the

cars, "do you know that you have never asked me where we are going for our journey?"

"I am trusting you to plan my future," she replied, turning from the window as she spoke.

"Thank you, my precious Kate; and I have ventured to plan one month of it. But now it is time for you to decide for or against."

"Tell me, then, and I will bring my deepest philosophy to the consideration of the subject," she replied, looking brightly up.

"Remember, if in the faintest possible way you feel that you do not like it, it is perfectly easy to change the entire programme. I propose first to go to New York, and there to show you again the church where little May became the arbiter of our fortunes. Then to-morrow afternoon, when it is cool and pleasant, to go on to Philadelphia. I have engaged the rooms that we occupied when our grandfather took May and her invalid brother to his home. We will stay there till the next afternoon, and then go on to D——. Richard will meet us at the station, and Sarah will welcome us at the parsonage. It is all ready for you, my own wife—even tea is ordered."

"Oh, dear James! nothing could be lovelier; I have long wanted to go with you over all those scenes. But how is it that the parsonage is unoccupied?"

"This has been my first and only extravagance. I have kept it exactly as we left it, Sarah and Richard in charge, only that I might take my bride—my precious wife—there for her honeymoon. If you had hesitated for a moment, you would never have known this. May is bound to inviolable secrecy."

"It is fortunate that I am perfectly delighted, else you would have had to keep a secret from your wife, and May would have lived a guilty accomplice," returned Kate, laughing.

"My only fear is that the associations there will be saddened by the memory of our grandparents ; but, Kate, we do not need gayety for happiness, and I so long to show you our home."

An earnest pressure of his hand answered this, and Mr. Thornton knew that Kate was content.

The plan was carried out ; on the evening of the third day they reached D——.

Richard stood on the platform, looking older than when he lifted "the boy" into the carriage ; but he was strong and vigorous, and shook hands so heartily, and greeted "Miss Kate" so warmly, that she seemed to have met an old friend.

The sun was touching the topmost ivy on the old tower when they stopped at the gate, the birds had ceased their evening song, but the little parsonage looked out as cheerfully as ever from under its heavy brows of leaves. The windows were all open, and a glimpse of a tea-table was seen through them, giving the little touch of domesticity that comes like a prophecy of happiness into the most romantic of bridal tours.

Sarah was a portly dame now, and with her gray hair and carefully arranged cap, stood in the door-way, a little uncertain how to receive "Master Jeems's wife." Kate, waiting for no ceremony, ran to her.

"Oh, Sarah, you are no stranger to me. I am so glad to see you."

Conquered at once, she exclaimed :

"Welcome, Miss Kate ; surely, Master Jeems's wife is a lovely sight for our old eyes. We've waited a long while for this joyful day."

The Reverend James, in his turn, received a warm greeting ; and then, while he and Richard were occupied with the luggage, Sarah showed Kate to the old guest-chamber, so long ago prepared for her husband, and if domestic

duties had not called her below, would have given a complete history of those days.

Kate was quite willing to be a few moments alone, and stood at the window in glad thought until her luggage came up and she could hear her husband's words of welcome to his old home. Then they went down to tea. This was served in Sarah's best fashion, and, according to express directions, in the dining-room, for in the study where of old they gathered in the evening stood the little table with the open Bible, the music-book, and the organ, where May had played the evening hymn, and the knitting on the sofa, where the "vanished hand" had laid it.

"I want you to see the dear old room as they left it, Kate," said her husband, opening the door; "they kept up their usual habits till the end. For a year May played the hymn at prayer-time, though there were hours when grandfather would dream out his thoughts in lovely harmonies on his beloved organ. I have often wished for a picture of the beautiful old man as he sat there in rapt enjoyment of his own creations. Here are portraits of both my grandparents; the eyes are sightless in this one, and the lids are drooped as if she were looking at her work; and in this," turning to the other, "the eyes have that far-off expression so peculiar to my grandfather. I used to fancy, when a boy, that he was gazing into heaven, and, now that I am a man, I feel the boyish thought was true."

"I cannot bear to think of ever moving anything in the room," said Kate, with tears in her eyes.

"Now that you have seen it all, Kate, my dream is fulfilled, and I can let it go back into daily life. I have one more memento to show you—we have just light enough. Come to the church-yard—it is not far off, and a path leads from the garden to it—I want you to see where we have laid them."

The fading light seemed to linger a moment on the pure white stone that formed a head-stone for the two graves, and under the names and dates Kate read :

“Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden,
and I will give you rest.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE HONEYMOON.

When Kate went down to the study the next morning, where she had been summoned for prayers, the organ was closed, the book of music restored to its place, the knitting laid in a work-basket on the sofa. One only relic was left untouched—the little table with its open Bible had not been removed, and beside it her husband was standing.

“I fear I have kept you waiting for me,” said she, entering in haste.

“No, Kate, my darling, you could not, for I am never ready till you come—you know, one cannot wait until after he is ready,” and the peculiarly tender tone was in itself a caress.

At that moment Sarah and Richard came in with tear-dimmed eyes, so that Kate could only reply by a look. Little Ellie once said, “Cousin Kate talks with her eyes,” and it may be this look was all that was necessary.

Her husband turned to the faithful old couple. “I cannot have tears,” he said; “we have no need to mourn for those who are enjoying bliss and glory beyond our highest imaginations. Let us rather learn from them the lesson, ‘Be ye also ready.’”

“That’s it, Master Jeems,” returned Richard; “you’re all right, but it’s such a little while since we were all so happy together here.”

“We will be happier *there*,” said Mr. Thornton.

“May I not open the organ once more and play the

morning hymn—I am sure you know it,” said Kate, turning to the old couple.

“That we do, Miss Kate—we’ll be right glad to sing again,” they replied.

Mr. Thornton raised the cover, with a whispered “Thanks, sweet wife,” and took his place beside her.

Kate’s marvellous musical genius made a drama of whatever she played. She delighted in the organ ; her sympathy with it, her power over what to a master seems its soul, brought out its response in loveliest tones. The old harmonies of Tallis seemed alive with song, even before her voice raised the grand soul-call.

“Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily course of duty run.
Shake off dull sloth, and early rise,
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

“Wake ! and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part,
Who all night long unwearied sing,
Glory to thee, eternal King.”

Verse after verse they sang, all strangely impressed with the feeling that the spirits of those who had gone were uniting with them. So intense was this impression, that as they ceased singing Kate lingered a moment on the last strain, and then, changing the key without abruptness, sung out their thoughts in the unrivalled solo :

“Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy holy name.”

Mr. Thornton looked at her as if one of the angel-choir had brought down a “cloud of glory from heaven which was her home,” and could scarcely control his emotions, or his voice, to read the chapter he had chosen for the day.

The one selected was the last one read by his grandfather. While the old man was reading, his voice had failed, and May, who was always beside him, answered his appealing look, and took up the words: "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." As May went on, in that wonderful chapter, the far-reaching eyes of the old Christian assumed a satisfied look, as if he had gained a glimpse of the Glory Land.

After the last verse—"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal," May heard a whispered "Amen." The eyes were fixed on the vision beyond, but he had spoken his last word.

She stood with her arm around him; he fell against her, and was carried to his room by his faithful servants, while May helped the sightless wife to an arm-chair by his side.

In a few days both had seen "the King in His beauty."

The eyes were opened, the tongue was loosed.

It was no wonder that Mr. Thornton's voice trembled as he read the sacred words, and that Sarah and Richard wept when they again heard them.

And yet it was not sorrow; it became even rejoicing, in the prayer that followed the chapter, for they were carried beyond this life to the "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and *grief* was *ingratitude* to Him who had fulfilled His promises to His servants.

When they were alone, it was for a while impossible for either the husband or wife to speak. Mr. Thornton recovered himself first. "I did not intend this, my own bright Kate; it was your heavenly music that took me so near to them. I nearly lost my self-control. But we will not regret what has thus brought together the end with the beginning of our lives, for we have so entirely united in a renewed

self-consecration that this room will seem sacred to us now. We have the same Lord abiding with us, and have no need for grief while he is present. Come, our breakfast waits; our little dining-room is cool and pleasant—the vines shade the windows, and the birds will sing for us.”

“It is a perfect dream of bliss,” said Kate, in a low voice, and then they stood a moment at the table. Mr. Thornton omitted the usual formula; “Let us have Thy blessing, as we rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks,” were his words.

“To-day must be all yours, Kate. What shall we do after breakfast?”

“My object to-day,” she returned, smiling, “is what May’s was on her first day. It is *investigation*. I want to see all the rooms, the church, the birds, the chickens, and Rover’s grave.”

And so, like two happy children, they wandered from room to room, from place to place. It all seemed familiar. May’s little room was just as she had left it, and the swallows were twinkling their shadows on the wall as on her first morning. The chickens were as much exercised at the approach of the strangers as if they were watching from their coops May’s first coming with their breakfast. The rooster screamed his warning to his wives, and “Ka-rah, Ka-rah-ah,” was shrieked as his family followed him, with a rush, to a place of safety.

“What idiotic chickens!” laughed Kate; “they seem to think we are wild beasts. May told me how they acted.”

“Remarkable instance of hereditary peculiarities,” returned the Reverend James. “These must be the great-great-great-grandchildren of May’s chickens.”

“I’ve been a-doin’ up Rover’s grave, Master Jeems,” said Richard.

They found it carefully turfed, and on a little board

which May had put up for a "head-stone" with some difficulty they deciphered the familiar words :

"Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my early days ;
None knew thee, but to love thee,
None named thee, but to praise."

"If you had known Rover you would not have thought it desecration to apply those lovely words to him," said Mr. Thornton, as Kate was silent.

"It startled me a little," she replied ; "but, after all, nothing is too good for a good dog."

They walked beside the river-bank after this, under the shade of the great trees that overhung it, and then on their return went into the old church.

"Here is May's pulpit—'the tub'—and, oh, dear James, let me see the tower."

"No, Kate—forgive me for the word ; it is just noon—high noon ; wait till the shadows of evening come. I have ordered an early dinner, for I must take you a long, long drive—oh, *such* a drive ! among the hills and valleys. The tower will stand till we return."

At this moment Sarah called them, and the shaded little room was a delightful relief to the outside light and heat.

The wealth of Richard's garden was on the table to do honor to "Master Jeems and Miss Kate," and as Kate expressed her appreciation, Sarah blandly remarked :

"There ain't no gardens in Yankee-land to beat our'n in Pennsylvania. Richard was up north one time, and he said it made his heart ache to see the watery vegetables folks eat ; and the butter was nothin' more nor less than a disgrace."

"Oh, Sarah, not quite so bad as that," returned Kate.
"My garden has not your varieties, but everything is good."

I will yield the palm to your butter ; I never saw anything like it."

"I was brought up on Sarah's bread and butter," humbly said her husband. "The result is before you."

"Proved!" returned Kate ; "and yet we had butter once 'worthy of our own dairy,'" imitating Mr. Hogeboom.

"Don't remind me of him. I was vexed at his audacity, and yet, the pained look with which he regarded me went to what was left of my heart."

James and Kate were hardly responsible beings then, and it is unjust to their present dignity to repeat the nonsense which they thought was conversation. There were faint plunges at jokes on Mr. Thornton's part, which Kate intensely enjoyed, and which—traitor that she was—she remembered for May's edification.

Even yet they recall the first days at the parsonage, and Kate says her husband would have written their history but that he had no *white ink*.

As the trees lengthened their shadows, and the old tower stretched itself on the ground far toward the south-east, they drove away among the hills and valleys of a locality unrivalled in its beauty. Amid the wondrous combinations of shade and golden light, where the mountains were crowned with glory and the valleys were resting in their shadow ; where little streams were *brookling* over the rocks and stones, and tinkling their sweet music ; where the bravery and dash of water-falls gave life to the stillness of their homes ; where the cattle upon the thousand hills rendered their praise in their acceptance of the gifts of the Lord—*there* were their souls filled with beauty.

Kate's sweet comment was, "It is as if a Divine voice called to the earth, 'Show forth the beauty that I have created,' and all nature said 'Amen' and praised the Lord."

CHAPTER XX.

THE OLD TOWER.

Sunday was a day of rare enjoyment to Kate, for her husband preached in the old church.

His text was the last verse read by his grandfather on the evening that his voice failed.

“Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.”

He succeeded in infusing such bright rays of hope in all his words that, although the sermon was solemn, and many wept at the references to their old pastor, there was no sadness left on their minds. Life was brighter to the hearers as they were impressed with the sure promise of that which would in its glory so utterly annihilate the shadows of this world, and the looking “onward,” as their thoughts were borne upward on the wings of faith, seemed a “substance of things hoped for,” “an evidence of things not seen.”

There was no second service during the months of July and August, and as the sun sunk low in the horizon Mr. Thornton and Kate mounted the tower, and passed their twilight and their evening there.

After enjoying the on-coming coolness, so grateful after the day's heat, Kate said : “I often think we make a great mistake in not using our roofs more than we do. It used to be so delightful in Europe to pass the evenings on those

high terraces, and in Cairo we always sought the top of the house when the sun was gone."

"I suppose the greater height of our houses is one reason that we do not use them ; and then, our warm season is comparatively so short, we hardly need the refreshment ; but if we did, we should often see atmospheric changes that we would greatly enjoy, and perhaps might better understand some of the Bible imagery. I remember reading an account that a missionary somewhere in the east—I think in Cairo—gave, of having gone to the house-top one morning before sunrise. In one corner on the roof he saw a heap of broken crockery and old water-pots, such as are filled and put on the roof to cool during the night. Some of the family slept near them, but had gone down into the house ; suddenly, as the sun appeared, a flock of doves flew from the shelter of the crockery, their wings glistening like silver as they rose in the morning light, and as the sunbeams touched them, turning golden in its rays. He exclaimed at once : ' Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.' "

"That is a perfect explanation," replied Kate. "I never before understood that verse. I may comprehend the psalms yet, ' she added.

"Let me try to help you in all troubles, Kate ; we will talk over the psalms some time, but to-day I want to ask a more personal question. May I not now know more of your religious life ? Whenever I have tried to ask you, you have seemed so pained at the request that I dared not press it. It will bring us nearer to each other, my precious wife, to talk of our heart's experiences."

"Mine have been so different from yours, dear, that I felt as if I could hardly explain them. Did you not tell me that you have no recollection of the time when you were not a Christian ? "

“I think I hardly worded it in that way, did I, Kate? Perhaps I did not fully explain my memory of early feelings. My first thoughts of God recognized Him as my father, watching over me and caring for me. I had a consciousness of feeling something of the gratitude and love that I would to an earthly father. I tried, in my ignorant way, to approve myself to Him. Afterward the tidings came to me of a Saviour, and of a Saviour's love. I learned it very simply as my mother read to us of Him in the Gospels. I never had heard of doubts, and would as soon have questioned my mother's veracity as the truth of the Bible, so that I accepted the story as the writers told it. It came to me in its fulness. The Lord was born that He might die; He died that we might live; and like as He rose again, so would we rise. He conquered sin, and paid its penalty—the Victor and the Sacrifice. I believed it all, simply and thoroughly—I have never doubted. What I could not understand, I thought was my own ignorance. It never troubled me. I had very little opportunity to hear explanations, for my mother had some pride about our clothes, and her discouragement sufficed to keep me from church, though I always expected to go ‘soon.’ All I could do was to read the story over and over again. I can remember how my difficulties vanished one by one—how one part threw light on another. My faith grew very strong; it was childlike in that very strength. Who can destroy a child's faith in its mother's love? When I had the privilege of my grandfather's teachings, they fell on a soil prepared by the Spirit. My religious life has been all peace and joy. When I hear the trials of others, I am thankful for the ‘still hours’ of communion that I have always had with my Lord—for my daily life of trust in Him. Now, my darling, am not I entitled to know by what road you came to this knowledge and faith?”

Kate replied: “There is not much to tell, and I mean

that you shall know all my thoughts, but—— However, I will try. You know that I was not brought up what is called ‘religiously ;’ on the contrary, I constantly heard the very foundations of faith questioned, and yet I never lost a desire to be a Christian. I had no idea how to accomplish it, for if I went to church nothing interested me but the music ; if I read the Bible, it all seemed to me as ‘idle tales.’ Still, the weight of dissatisfaction pressed upon my heart, the want of a faith was a weariness to my soul. Someone said one day to my father : ‘If religion is not in the Bible, where are we to look for it ? That it exists as a governing principle in the hearts of thousands of beings, we cannot deny. Where do they get it ? They all give the same answer, and tell us it is in the Bible. Some day I mean to read that book—there is some mystery about it.’ My father replied : ‘I have often thought I would look the subject up ; it seems cowardly to condemn it in ignorance.’

“These words from those who were considered unbelievers impressed me. I determined to find out this mystery of the Bible. I began at the beginning ; the Creation, and all of Genesis, interested me. I soon found the promise of a Saviour to a sinning people, and I may say here that I never lost that ray of light—it was continually shining like a thread of gold interwoven in the whole fabric of the history. I was fascinated with the character of Moses—his utter self-abnegation, his earnest teachings ; then, the multitude of sacrifices amazed me. I soon found out that they all pointed to Christ, and in their immense number I learned that they typified the all-covering power of His sacrifice. I was interested, but my heart was not touched ; I wearied of the wars, and of the historical books. The inconsistencies of David and Solomon puzzled me, but I plodded through, never losing the line of light. In a general way I discovered that the nearer the nation of Israel kept to their ceremonies and their worship, the greater

were their blessings, and that when they turned to idolatry everything went wrong with them. The psalms and poetical books I omitted ; the Prophets I read ; but I seemed to want some solid foundation, and would have omitted all parts of these prophecies except the historical chapters if I had not found such constant promises of Christ's coming. When I finished the Old Testament, I asked myself what I had gained, and in some way I had great satisfaction in the deep impression of the promise of the Saviour—one who would fulfil what I afterward learned to call 'types,' as well as the direct promises, or, I suppose I should say, prophecies."

"A type," said Mr. Thornton, "is an acted or pictured promise ; a prophecy is also a promise. Your account is deeply interesting to me, and every experience is a help. Go on, dear Kate."

"Here I was assailed by doubts, such as I think do not come to those who have an early religious education. Many never know how they gained their first faith : I felt that I had none—I was not sure of anything."

"Did you not believe in the Bible as a revelation from God ?"

"Not thoroughly ; I believed in it as a history, wonderfully preserved by its guardians the Jews, and if I defined my wish, it was to test it by itself. If I found it consistent, I expected to believe in it as a revelation. At this point I analyzed my doubts. I took them one by one, measured their height and depth, rejected what I considered unworthy of me, and then began to consider those that seemed important. I read and studied—I was afraid to pray ; but help came, and I was enabled to combat and conquer some of my greatest difficulties. When one was disposed of, I treated it in the most business-like manner—I refused positively to listen to it again. I had judged it and sentenced it."

"You certainly had a most militant spirit about it all. I never heard of a faith fought for in this way before, and I cannot thank you enough for telling me. Stop, if you are tired, Kate."

"I am not tired; it seems like a dream to go back to it all. I used to feel that I was climbing the hill 'difficulty,' and fancied I passed mile-stones that marked my advance. All this time I had not studied the New Testament. I feared to begin it. I felt it was my last hope. If it failed, I expected only despair, and I was afraid of the test. At last I was ready to read it as a book that professed to be a gospel. I could not even then feel sure of it as a revelation from Heaven. I read with a new intelligence and with a new interest. On analyzing these feelings about it, I found that I was looking for the fulfilment of the centuries of hope the history of which I had learned in the Old Testament. This I found. I saw the *God-King*—the star and the sceptre of Balaam's prophecy, the *God-Man*, the virgin-born of Isaiah's. I believed in Him, and said, 'Thou Lord and thou God!' And thus I followed Him afar off. He was not *mine*—He had not spoken to my soul," and Kate paused and shivered as she recalled those days of disappointed hope.

"In all this struggle, Kate, you were gaining strength. Had you not begun to pray before this period?"

"Yes, I began when I read how our Lord conquered the tempter in the wilderness. I trusted him as a *power* after that."

"Kate, you are weary; draw your shawl closer, my child; rest before you tell me more. When you studied the temptation did you notice its likeness to that of Eve? She was tempted through the flesh, through the eyes, and through intellectual pride. Our Lord, four thousand years after, was tempted by the same evil spirit—first through the needs of the flesh in His hunger; then He was

made to see the glory of the world, and the tempter offered to resign his reign over it; and again He was tempted to prove Himself superior to the laws of nature by casting Himself from a height, and in His safety proclaiming Himself God."

"I had never thought of that. Oh, James, how much you have to tell me and to teach me—life will be too short for all."

"Eternity will be ours, when we will learn together. Now, will you go on, my own dear wife?"

"I thought my experiment had failed; then I remembered the darkness and the doubts in which I had begun my search for truth, and gained some comfort in the consciousness that I had, as it were, reached the light, although it had not penetrated my soul. I rejoiced intellectually in the completion of the record. In the accurate fulfilment by the New Testament of all the requirements of the Old. It was like solving a mathematical problem—I had found a solution of types, prophecies, and promises. Why, I asked, do I not feel satisfied with my work? I had much self-gratulation on it. That *I* had done it, that *I* had persevered, that *I* ought to be rewarded for my work, was my feeling. *I* had fought, *I* had conquered. Then I asked, Where is my joy and peace in believing? Alas! I had nothing that Christians enjoyed, and so I reasoned I could not be a Christian. I tested my faith. Did I believe in the Creator of heaven and earth having taken the form of a man, and having died for the sins of the world? Did I believe that He rose again, that He ascended into heaven? All this I believed. Did I believe that He would accept me, and save me? Yes, I believed that. What, then, was the matter?"

"While I was striving to find out, a very painful duty became plain to me. Day after day I put it from me. At last I said, 'I can never accomplish that unless I have some

higher motive for it ; I will do it for the love of Christ !' This came to me like a revelation. I forgot myself, I forgot to measure what amount of faith would be necessary to enable me to do this for Him. I thought of Him—my Lord. I did it for His sake—my Saviour. From that moment He took my hand in his, He accepted me, and then I exclaimed, '*My Lord and My God !*' "

"My precious Kate ! That was it : to forget one's self, to give up questions about measurements of faith. It was one look resting on the upraised serpent that was the means of healing to the sufferer—it was the unconscious faith. The faith that did not wait to ask, 'Do I possess strength to raise my eyes?' It is the entire acceptance without reserve of Christ in His love and in His work.

"I do not know how to thank you for this life history ; it is very dear to me. In all your struggles the contrast was strong with my experience. I am reminded of the twelve gates to the New Jerusalem. I entered on the calm and sunny southern side, you through many a northern storm and tempest."

"Mrs. Montgomerie often talks of those twelve gates, when she speaks of the different forms of worship in different churches. Now, I have one more subject of which to ask you."

"Not a word more to-night, my own precious wife ; we have talked till Vega is on the meridian ; it must be nearly eleven o'clock. See that bright star in Lyra. Most appropriately is that constellation over us to-night. Do you remember why it is among the stars ? How the waves ceased to flow, and the wild beasts became tame, as Apollo played on his lyre, and even the mountains came to listen ? Well was the chief star named Vega—'he shall be exalted'—for 'exalted' indeed shall He be who really works these wonders. But I have wandered to my fancies again.

I began to say that thus have I listened to your voice, forgetful of time, of dew, of evening's coolness——"

"Oh, I never take cold—and now——"

"Stop, siren," he exclaimed, putting his hands to his ears; "I am powerless in the presence of music, and we will unquestionably be wrecked in the difficult piece of navigation before us unless I retain my reason. Not a word more till we are safely on the earth."

Kate laughed at this unwonted facetiousness on the part of her husband, and again made a note of it to tell May, one of May's descriptions of her brother being, "He is the best fellow in the world, but he is a regular tombstone—a carved list of solemn virtues."

Sarah met them at the door which opened into the church.

"Oh, Master Jeems, but you're the imprudentest man! I'll have you both down with newmony. There's Miss Kate now, her dress is that damp with doo it's as limp as a wet rag. Come right in to the kitchen fire."

"Thanks for your warm hospitality, we need hardly proceed to such extreme measures. It was Miss Kate's fault, Sarah—I was listening to her music, and forgot the hour."

"Well!" returned the good dame, reproachfully, "I never expected to hear you throwin' the blame on your wife; 'twas bad enough for Adam. I always held he was a poor, mean creetur; but he never had no education, nor schoolin', which stands to reason, as he never was a boy; but you, Master Jeems, ain't got no excuse!" and here his advantages over his great progenitor were too palpable to require further elucidation, and Sarah busied herself with Kate's damp garments.

After this conversation, Mr. Thornton was haunted by the fear that his companionship would prove too grave for Kate, that she would lose her joyous nature, which, though he but half comprehended, he enjoyed the flashing of its

gleams of sunlight among the shadows of life. He reproached himself for what he feared was his selfish love, and with a greater self-abnegation than even he understood he proposed to accept some of the numerous invitations to pass their evenings among the old parishioners. Kate was in dismay. She had never known a pleasure equal to the evenings with her husband, raised literally as well as spiritually above the earth. She knew they could never enjoy just such isolation again, and the evenings of the three weeks to be passed at the old parsonage seemed too few for half she desired to hear and say. It was rarely possible for Kate to disguise any emotion—her mobile features betrayed her—and Mr. Thornton was frightened at her look of disappointment, which she hastily tried to remove by putting an assent in words.

“No, Kate, not after that look! I don’t wish you to go anywhere without your soul, and I see that it has chosen the old tower for its shrine. We will pass all possible evenings there, and will listen or talk, while the stars keep watch. Don’t fancy that it is not an earthly paradise to me—you do not know how I dreaded your assenting to my proposal.”

“I’m half sorry I did not,” returned Kate, “to punish you for making it. Do believe me, dear James, when I tell you that I am happier than I ever supposed possible in this life. There is something, too, in the little platform, with its ivied walls and starry canopy, that is so different from rooms with doors and windows, that I feel in a sort of dream-land, and fancy that no earthly care can touch us there.”

It is needless to say that more evenings were passed there than I can tell of. Led by his wife’s interest, Mr. Thornton recalled the thoughts which seemed to fall upon him when he alone used the little retreat as his ‘study,’ and the evening’s communion on holy themes became the hope of the day.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE VOICE OF THE PSALM.

Sarah's remonstrances availed nothing. Kate's gowns one by one yielded their freshness to the evening dew that seemed to gather for this especial purpose upon the "ivied platform" of the tower. Every morning the faithful servant tried to restore the evening's damage, and paid no attention to Kate's extravagant ideas when she penitently stood beside the ironing table with, "It's no matter, Sarah; indeed I don't care in the least for that gown. Leave it as it is, and I will wear it to-night when we go again. I don't want to give you so much trouble."

"'Tain't no trouble, Miss Kate," sighed Sarah; "but 'tain't right to spile things, and to-night you've got to go to Mrs. Blaine's to tea—it won't never do to be sayin' 'no' to the folks as want to see Master Jeems again." Then fortunately Sarah remembered her "manners," and added, "and his noo wife."

"I forgot Mrs. Blaine. But we will go, Sarah, and I'll tell you all the lovely things the people say about Mr. Thornton. Then to-morrow night we will go on the tower, so don't worry any more."

Sarah smiled a grim smile, but abated not a whit of her care. She admired "Master Jeemses wife" immensely, and enjoyed the happiness of the two, but not to reprove imprudence and extravagance was more than could be expected of her. She and Richard shook their wise heads over the subject of how these young people were ever to

live and keep things straight. "It's a blessin' they've got Miss May," said Sarah; "I hope she won't never go to be a-gettin' married, an' to leave Master Jeems."

"She'd never forget her dooty like that," said Richard, who fully agreed with Sarah that the care of "Master Jeems" was the "bounden duty" of all the family. How these good people were able to aid in this important work will appear in good time.

Meanwhile, a delightful evening was passed among the parishioners at Mrs. Blaine's, and then another when Kate returned to a subject on which she had told her husband she wanted help.

"What shall we talk of to-night, my Kate?" asked he, when they had mounted, as usual, to the terraced top of the old church tower.

"I have an especial subject for this evening," she replied. "I want some help in understanding the psalms."

"What is the difficulty? they surely are written to meet every mood of the human heart, and to answer every question of the soul."

"Yes, that may be; but there are some that I cannot follow. Most of them are written by one mind—by David—and yet they contain extraordinary and inexplicable heights and depths! At one time David is a helpless, hopeless man; at another he is raised to a position of such spiritual exaltation that he sees with the eyes of his soul, and is incomprehensible to those who are only human. I know that many of the psalms are directly prophetic of our Lord and are clearly explained by the light of the New Testament, but my trouble is with those whose fulfilment seems located neither in heaven nor on earth."

"But surely, Kate, such psalms are but a small portion of the whole."

"Their range of thought is so far-reaching that perhaps they seem multiplied to me. I am thankful there are

some I understand ; the 119th is my delight. After studying the books of Moses, and learning the wisdom of the Law, and the wondrous perfection of the Ritual, I had no words in which to express my feelings but those of Ezra, 'How I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day—thy testimonies are the rejoicing of my heart.' I do not doubt that the psalm was written by Ezra as a manual of devotion, after his arrangement of the sacred books, but I would amend the words 'manual of devotion' and say an 'outburst of thanksgiving ;' do you remember the words, 'at midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee ?' "

"Indeed I do, and 'the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy, teach me thy statutes.' The whole psalm has always been to me also a sort of relief, a safety-valve to an over-full heart. But how about the penitential psalms—what are they to you ?"

"They are as much too deep as the others are too high. I doubt if many persons feel their sins so intensely."

"Some have done so, but the burden of sin does not press heavily on all. Not many who come under our notice, sin as David did ; but even if those psalms are not a personal experience, do you think they are too deeply abhorrent of sin in the abstract, of such sin as required the atonement of our Lord upon the cross ? I think David saw greater possibilities in sin than we think of."

"That may be, but we are directed to the psalms as devotional exercises—what I can feel for myself is what I need."

"We must choose among them, dear Kate, such as are suited to our wants ; we have wandered a little from your difficulty. If I understand you we will leave out those called *Messianic*, the *penitential*, and——"

"The *historical*, if I may so call the records of the Lord's long-suffering and tender mercy to His chosen people. Now explain to me the pæans of thanksgiving for a condi-

tion of things that David never saw, and that did not even exist in paradise."

"I understand you. Did it ever occur to you that they may also be prophetic?"

"Yes, I have thought so, but I do not fully know of what time. Take, for instance, the 98th, I have studied the authorities about it. The authorship is not given. Townsend's date is 1004 B.C., and the occasion of its use, on the removal of the Ark to the Temple. Calmet places it after the Babylonish captivity, and supposes it sung on the dedication of the second Temple; all agree that it was intended for Temple worship—it is classed among psalms of thanksgiving; now tell me its appropriateness."

"Do you allow sufficiently for the *poetical* element of the psalms? Certainly the universe could be called upon to praise the Lord when either Temple was dedicated. Nothing could have been more magnificent than the dedication of Solomon's Temple. Read only the arrangement of the singers, it is in 2 Chron. v. 12-14: 'And all the Levites, the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets . . . as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.' Surely the Temple choirs might sing most truly, 'With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord the King.' The second Temple was less

magnificent in its arrangements, and yet Judah's company had been brought from captivity and restored to their land. They too might 'sing unto the Lord a new song.'"

"Do not think me persistent—I acknowledge all you say, but when I remember that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Spirit, I feel that such words as are in the 98th psalm have a direct message to me. When will I understand its meaning?"

"It told the victory of God's truth, the vindication of his Word, the accomplishment of His purpose," said her husband.

"Yes, but I want something more definite, I want to sing such psalms as the 98th and 99th from my heart."

"You shall sing them from your heart! They are called Royal psalms, from the 93d to the 100th inclusive, omitting the 94th. *Seven* psalms tell of the glory of Jehovah's reign on earth. *Two* advents are prophesied in the Old Testament, *two* advents are described in the New. These psalms are really Messianic—they tell of the second advent of Messiah as King, they tell of Jehovah's reign. I hesitated to show you all my heart, for I only find a part of my belief in the best expositors, but—here on our tower—alone beneath the stars, let us pass into the future, *beyond* this present dispensation, *beyond* the rising to meet the Lord, *beyond* the Paradise of the redeemed, *beyond* the tribulations of the earth, *beyond* the union of Jew and Israelite, with their fourth Temple; onward, Kate, till the words of the redeemed are fulfilled; 'Thou hast made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.' Not *above* it, Kate, '*on* the earth.' And on *this* earth, of which the wilderness and solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like a rose, it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. 'And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their

heads. They will come to a Jerusalem rebuilt, and will look upon Zion the city of our solemnities ;' their 'eyes shall see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down.' Glorious will be the Temple upon the top of the mountain, for the Lord will 'set His Sanctuary in the midst for evermore.' The wall of partition will be broken down and Jew and Gentile together worship in its courts, for 'Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising.' Then shall the Lord be king, 'from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same,' for 'the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, . . . and the earth shined with His glory.' Then ! *then*, Kate, when we are standing among the arches and the palm-trees of the courts of that last earthly Temple, looking toward the Sanctuary, with its galleries of white-robed choirs, *then* we will know what David meant, as the glorious incense of music bears aloft the words.

" 'O, sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvellous things ; His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Himself the victory.' Another choir, with the sounding of harp and organ, takes up the song of praise to Him who hath brought Israel to worship in His courts, to Him who hath loved us, and washed us with His blood.

" 'The Lord hath made known His salvation. His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered His mercy and truth toward the house of Israel, all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.'

" Then, echoing from gallery to gallery, from court to court, in loveliest strains, the coming of the King is proclaimed. 'Sing unto the Lord with a harp, and the voice of a psalm, with trumpets and sound of a cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord the King.'

“Back and forth, until the air is jubilant with song, and every heart ready to join in the full chorus :

‘Let the floods clap their hands,
Let the hills be joyful together—

Before the Lord !

For He cometh !

To judge the earth and His people with equity.’ ”

Mr. Thornton paused ; he had stood bareheaded under the star-glory, with eyes upraised. He had forgotten all but that “far beyond.”

Presently he said : “Kate, are you answered ? ”

“Oh, more than answered ! Now I know when we can sing that ‘the Lord reigneth.’ Now I understand that as type and prophecy united in Solomon’s Temple, believing Israel could sing these psalms of prophecy and of promise. How soul-entrancing it is to look forward to uniting in that chorus. I can almost fancy that we already stand on one of the towers of the Holy City, waiting for the sounds which will teach us true music. The perfect harmony of earth and heaven.”

“Perfect harmony, for it will be Reconciliation.”

CHAPTER XXII.

HOME.

Many happy days followed, but all more or less like those of which I have told, and therefore I will not tell more of this particular honeymoon. Someone, a very good clergyman, too, said he did not believe a bride and groom ever had the enjoyment in the serious conversations here described. Perhaps not ; and if my readers wish to place themselves in the position of Kate or her husband, and to omit all the sermons and long talks, they can skip the parsonage experiences, and read a letter received from May by her brother.

He read it aloud before he discovered that Kate was by no means to know its contents until her wishes on the subject were expressed.

May detailed her trials in reducing the house and its belongings to a proper condition to receive the future master and mistress, and how these trials were increased by the incompetency of the servants. All being explained to her brother in a most comical way, as if the subject were utterly unknown to him. In fact, it was, but the difficulties were sufficiently clear to make her proposition very important. It was that Sarah and Richard might return with them, and bring order out of chaos. "The present cook," May wrote, "is a bull in a china-shop. She sweeps destruction in her path and flirts desolation from her skirts. A cook, Jim—did you ever hear of one?—is a person who, although ostensibly living in a kitchen, controls the entire

happiness of the family. She can poison all their joys, destroy their best-laid plans, make life a burden and existence a misery. These are the gifts and capabilities of the present incumbent.

"Suggest our old treasures in a skilful and gentle way, dear old boy ; don't fire them at Kate's head, or let her think *we* want them. Sarah's character is not one that develops like a sky-rocket, and its brilliancy may not have impressed my lovely sister. Now, do be careful, Jim."

So he was. He read every word of the letter aloud, without looking it over first, carefully omitting nothing, and very properly came to a sudden stand-still at these last words.

"Better keep on," said Kate, laughing merrily over his discomfiture. "There is no help for it now. I see into all May's secret plans, and will tell her that her confidential communications would be safer addressed to me."

"Oh—but don't have them if you don't want to. May can find someone else," the reader exclaimed, in dismay.

"But I do want to. I trust they will consent to come. Don't be frightened. May is a mine of wisdom, and I trust will dismiss her menagerie before our return."

So Kate proceeded without delay to make the proposal to Sarah. The good woman was secretly delighted, but would give no definite answer till Richard was asked.

"We can't work as we once did," she said ; "but howsomever, if it's app'inted, and it's best, it had better be. I'd rather work for Miss May and Master Jeems than not ; and, as you say, that there Job can help with the sextoning."

Kate was too much pleased with the result of her negotiations to be disturbed at this utter ignoring of her claims ; she trusted to time to give her a place in the hearts of the old couple.

Richard proved his good sense by accepting the proposal

at once, and Kate lost no time in reporting the good news to May.

The last quarter of the honeymoon was passed in the manner more common to brides and grooms. A conventional wedding journey, including many lovely scenes and places, ended only in September. They were ready then to begin their home life, and to resume their active parish work.

Kate will tell her own story of those early days.

KATE'S JOURNAL.

"It is the brightest and loveliest of September days, and of all days these are the most gold-laden of the year. The light is level in long lines of glory, a depth and warmth seems to give a luxuriance and gorgeousness that no other season has.

"It is the day after our home-coming. 'The day of possession,' James says. May went last night to Burnside, and this morning we were alone at our breakfast-table; our silver and our china made it a perfect picture, and I was behind the urn, so that James could not see me. He moved it on one side. 'Will it be less convenient there?' he asked.

"What a silly thing to write!

"Mrs. Montgomerie came for May yesterday evening. 'I had to look in upon you,' she said, in her cheery voice. 'I only wanted to see whether there is any hope of your settling down into a properly demure pastor and pastorella,' and she laughed as she swept May off before I knew she was going. She need not have gone—she is so a part of James, that I have accepted her without any of that holding back that I might have as to a husband's sister. I am so used to his look of appeal to her, when conventionalities are too much for him, or when he needs help in any social trouble. I don't think I object to it; sometimes,

perhaps, I have thought that when we were married he would look to me for solutions of life-problems. Perhaps he will—it don't matter much—his heart is so great, so wonderful, that I can spare May one corner.

“ ‘One corner,’ when she used to have the whole. I am selfish, but just at present I see no hope of amendment ; in fact, I mistook—I am *generous*, to give the smallest portion.

“ When I came to my room—‘my room,’ do you hear that?—my room in my own house—when I came up-stairs, I found on my writing-table a velvet-covered book. On the outside, in silver letters, were the words, ‘Kate’s Journal,’ then the date.

“ An exquisite writing apparatus and gold pen lay beside it.

“ ‘Did you put this here for me?’ I asked of my husband.

“ I will not tell even *you*—my journal—what he said, or how he said it. He thought I might like sometimes to put down my thoughts in it—‘not for me to see,’ he added, ‘only for your own communion with your own heart.’

“ And how I thanked him, or what I said, is no affair of yours—little velvet book, do you think you will know everything?

“ It was so delicious to be at our own tea-table, James opposite to me, and May brimming over with fun and sympathy. That seems an odd mixture, but it is May exactly. Half of life is a joke to her, but never at the expense of feeling. One is amused and carried away by her nonsense, but has never a wound. As I said before, after tea she went away. ‘My dear,’ she said, ‘I am tired out with my anxieties lest you should find a speck on your household horizon. I must rest at Burnside. Besides, I should die of envy—such bliss is agony to an outsider.’

“ ‘May!’ said James, reproachfully, whereupon May fell on his neck and kissed him.

“ ‘There’s only one of you, you know, you precious old Jim ; let me go for a while—I would rather take your happiness by instalments. A sister’s heart never rejoiced more than mine. Kate and you are twined and intertwined around its pillars—mention the “pillars of a heart” in your next sermon, Jim—but I want you to be alone for a while.’

“Before we could answer, Mrs. Montgomerie came, and then we were alone in our new home.

“ ‘To-day, September 4th, all my household duties are done. Sarah has quietly assumed most of my cares. I tried to dust the rooms, but Sarah had done it already. I went to the cage of the bullfinch, but it was fresh and clean, and its feathered occupant was singing rapturously in the sunbeam that gilded its prison-house. That bird must have the freedom of the house ; I am in no mood for bolts and bars to confine any of God’s creatures.

“I tried the poultry yard, but everything was in order there, only Boz bounding around me.

“ ‘Sarah, can I help you in any way?’ I meekly suggested.

“ ‘No, thank you, Miss Kate ; everything is so new and clean, there ain’t scarce anything to do. I’m ready for your orders, if you please, though.’

“Sarah said that, from a stern sense of duty, she had not had ‘orders’ for a generation.

“I concluded to accept the suggestion, and talked learnedly about our dinners, hoping at the end of my exordium that she was ‘comfortable and happy.’

“ ‘Comfortable ! Most certainly ; both me and Richard is ; and, Miss Kate, if we can do for you and Master Jeems and Miss May, we will be happy enough. I never needed nothin’ to entertain me. When my work is over, I reads my Bible, and thinks over what I am to do to-morrow.’

“ ‘Faithful over a few things, thou shalt be ruler over many things,’ I said.

“‘Jest so, Miss Kate ; ’tain’t no use to worry. Jest do what the Lord puts nearest to you—that’s my rule.’

“‘A good rule it is, Sarah—the nearest duty first.’

“‘Master Jeems said if I should see you to say he is in the church with Richard.’

“And I had wasted a half-hour away from him. No, not wasted—I gained two lessons from Sarah. The nearest duty first, and the preparation for life’s great to-morrow. More than that, she told me of content ; but I had no need for that lesson, with my heart full of joy.

“I went into the church. James put out his dear hand and drew me to him. ‘I want you to see how beautifully clean everything is. Richard says there is hardly anything to do.’

“We talked a while to Richard, and then he went away on some errand for James, and my husband and I sat down in the rector’s pew and recounted our blessings.

“‘James,’ I said, ‘it is not one of the least that I can help you in your parish work. My household cares are to be light, I find, and I am longing for real occupation. We have had a long holiday.’

“‘Let us take counsel on this matter,’ said he, drawing a paper from his pocket—‘a sort of petition from some of the ladies for a new society to sew for the poor.’

“‘Have we many poor?’

“‘The factory people are principally in the other part of the village, and are cared for by the chapel. There are twelve families among our communicants who need help, and a few scattered people whom I am in the habit of assisting. I want to try a new plan.’

“And then he asked my advice about dividing the poor of the parish among those of the communicants who would be willing to undertake the charge, the idea being to make them responsible for certain families. He saw the danger of pauperizing the poor, but hoped to meet this. I ap-

proved of dividing the families formally, but thought both had better come to him. Those who were willing to look after the needy to report to him, and those who needed care also. This plan he liked. We then talked of divisions of parish duty, and the benefit of each member of the church having some especial work. 'I want a more thoroughly working church,' he said; 'all to feel their responsibility for its well-being. My first care is to preach the Gospel, in the pulpit, in the Sunday-school, and in daily life. The second, to keep the whole body in vigorous work, and in good running order.'

"But I cannot tell all we said, all the plans we made. I went up and tried the dear organ again, and we decided on what we should sing on Sunday. Then James told me again how I had helped him by illustrating his thoughts by my singing. We sung a lovely hymn together, and I felt as if I never wanted to leave the church. It seemed as if it would be beautiful to live there.

"We watched the sun illumine the different parts, we talked of the colored lights that fell in different places, and then we went to the New Jerusalem with its rainbow hues. And, oh, how hard it was to say 'We are coming, Sarah,' when she called us to dinner.

"But dinner was very delightful after all, and after dinner Aunt Alice sent her new carriage for us to take a drive, on the express condition, she said, that we returned there to tea.

"They had all been so good to let us have one quiet day that we agreed to this.

"What rejoicing there was over us! All were well and happy. Ellie is pale, but jumped into my arms as she always does.

"They all came in after tea—the same old tea on the grand piazza—grandma and May, and Mr. and Mrs. Montgomerie. We had a very, very happy evening, and now I am in my beautiful room writing about my first days. . .

"Three weeks have passed; our darling May is home again. She does not interfere with our happiness, but adds to it by her love and sympathy. I think it is a little hard for her sometimes. The days of quiet and of leisure are over; we all are occupied from morning to night, a happy, bright life of work for others. I am so rejoiced that James has no idea of keeping me apart from his parish labors. I am with him in every duty, except his preaching and parish visits. Those I would rather he should make alone. I know there are many things his people will tell him that even his wife must not hear."

"My journal is neglected. It is November, and the ground is already covered with snow. Ellie is not so strong as in summer, and yet there really is nothing the matter. I cannot define why we look at her with anxiety. Mr. Hogeboom is urging Aunt Alice to pass the winter in Cuba. She cannot leave us, she says.

"James' sermons are wonderful—like someone inspired. He is only trammelled by notes—his thoughts come too fast even for his words. How he thanked me for the Jubilate last Sunday! He was going to preach on the Feast of Tabernacles, and everything was to be in accordance with the subject. If the Jewish ceremonials are ever restored, James will certainly be the first one in Jerusalem."

Here the journal, as it was named on the outside of the book, was closed for months. The daily duties increased, Mr. Thornton finding enough to occupy a battalion, and until five o'clock each day there was work for all. After that hour the little circle usually passed their evenings together, never weary of intercourse that seemed ever new.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHADOWS.

The winter which began so early became so severe that the pleasure of passing the evenings together was given up. The roads were almost impassable, from the repeated storms, and many houses were blocked with snow.

Mr. Thornton formed a society among the boys of the Sunday-school to clear away the snow from the houses of the poorer members of the church. Each one who joined this society of the "Jolly Diggers," as they called themselves, received a present of high rubber boots and warm mittens. This saved their spending their days with wet feet, as of necessity their work was done before school.

Job Beers was captain, and asserted his dignity by driving to his work in his sled. His duty was to superintend the work, and to report where it was needed. He was good-natured and just, so that the boys were willing to yield to his authority. There was one objection to the "Diggers;" they considered it incumbent on them to "stop at the parsin's an' give it tew him reg'lar." As this ceremony took place at the first glimpse of dawn, and consisted in three cheers and a tiger, which were repeated till the much-enduring "parsin" stood at the window and waved his hand, it may be inferred that there were briars as well as roses in the pastor's garden.

In the parsonage kitchen, Sarah was obliged to consent to a temporary assistant, to aid in the preparation of the food to be sent out daily, for sickness followed the ex-

tremely inclement weather, and many poor families were prostrated with colds, which neglected, became fevers, and then diphtheria began its ravages.

The number of families who were supported by factory work was very great, and the proportion of children large.

As the epidemic increased, it was difficult to find enough nurses, although many volunteered their help, and from the beginning May devoted herself to the work. Kate vainly tried to obtain permission to assist, but her husband's face of distress was pitiable.

"Don't ask it, Kate. I simply cannot consent. You run risk enough in seeing May and me."

"May goes," said Kate. At which May replied :

"I have the advantage over you, my dear ; I never vowed to obey that tyrannical old Jim," and then as usual she made a plunge in his arms and kissed him.

"I must bring two children here to-day," said Mr. Thornton ; "can you find a place for them, Kate ?" She promised to do what she could for them, but still it was hard to see the brother and sister go off without her. At dinner-time May came back ; this was unusual.

"Has Jim told you," she asked, "what I have been trying to beat into his precious head ?"

"Not a word," said Kate ; "I have been so busy with the frightened children that I have not seen him."

"It is this: Aunt Alice wishes to help with the nursing, Mrs. Herndon also ; the only trouble was with their children. Nora Herndon will go to Burnside to take Charlotte's place ; she can do a maid's duties now. Aunt Alice and I will stay at Mrs. Herndon's. Laura will take care of the Waterside children, and all communication will be through John Brace in the mill, where we are fumigated. The infectious fever increases ; we must work while we can."

"Well put in, May," said Kate.

"My dear, as the Lord needs us we will have strength."

"Why can He not be trusted to take care of me?"

"Kate! Kate! don't ask it," and Mr. Thornton looked beseechingly at May.

"No, Jim, you know I don't agree with you; but there is no need yet; we have six besides the hired nurses. Be patient, Kate."

And Kate found sufficient occupation in preparing food and clothes; and in taking care of the children sent away from infection. All were at work at Burnside, even John and the coachman being occupied in errands of mercy, while a horse and sleigh were put at Mr. Thornton's disposal by Mr. Montgomerie, and another provided by his mother for Mr. Watkins, who preached at the chapel. Even old Susan forgot her aches and pains in the general distress, and made herself quite useful in the Burnside store-room in giving out articles of clothing. As to the colored cook, Lucy, she was mortally afraid the world was coming to an end. She had seen a meteor, and had felt the explosion of a powder-mill. It was far away, but she thought it was an earthquake.

"Don spec me to blieve," she said, "that when I was all shooked up, t'was notin but a mill." These portentous events, added to the unprecedented snow-storms and the raging epidemic, thoroughly frightened her into struggling to do her duty with a rigidness she had never felt before.

She volunteered to take the laundry work, and with Nora's assistance accomplished it satisfactorily. Kate was at last permitted to join the nurses; not to remain at any one sick-bed, but to watch while others rested. This was as much needed as regular nursing, and Kate was happier.

"How Mr. Thornton stands seeing those girls pass their time in those fevered houses, I cannot imagine," said Mrs.

Montgomerie to herself one day, as she looked out at the thickly falling snow-flakes. "I suppose he cannot help it, but if anything should happen to them!"

"Did you call me, ma'am?" asked Nora, coming in.

"No, my child, I was talking to myself. Is Susan able to knit to-day?"

"Oh, yes, she is doing nicely. She likes giving out the clothes. I hear our sleigh-bells, don't you, ma'am?" It was always "our" with everything at Burnside.

"Yes, the sleigh is coming in the gate. Run, open the door, I do believe Mrs. Thornton is inside."

"Come in, child," called Polly, as Kate, with a large bundle in her arms and a little girl beside her, entered the open door.

"My child! what is it? Come right in. There, Nora, take Mrs. Thornton's cloak. Come in, little girl. Kate, what *have* you got?"

"Ellen Morton's baby," she replied, placing the bundle in a chair. "Nora, take Janey to the kitchen and give her something to eat, they have no fever at the Mortons'."

As the door closed on the children, she sank exhausted on the sofa.

"I will explain in a moment," she said, but was utterly spent, and Mrs. Montgomerie asked no more questions, but hastened to remove her wraps and tenderly to give restoratives.

It was useless to reproach anyone for over-work, no one could stop while strength lasted, and Kate knew that sympathy only would come from her old friend. The color began to return to her pale face, but she did not speak, and Mrs. Montgomerie took up the bundle of shawls that Kate had laid in the chair and opened them sufficiently to find an entirely nude infant, with eyes closed, and mouth set as if it would never open. She carried it at once to Lucy.

"Here, Lucy, you know all about babies"—this was bare-faced flattery—"see what you can do for this poor child ; give it warm milk, half water. Nora, run up to Susan and ask for one of the babies' bottles, and the smallest clothes that are left."

More than ever convinced that the end was coming, Lucy took the child, and holding it with one arm, busied the other with warming milk for it.

"When was baby born, Janey?" asked Mrs. Montgomerie of the little girl, who was soothing her sorrows with a bowl of bread and milk.

"I don' know, ma'am ; I went to sleep on the floor, and when I waked up, there was Mrs. Thornton holding that baby, and Sarah Duffy was working round. I guess she brought it, I don't see what ever she did it for."

"It's your little brother, my dear," replied Mrs. Montgomerie.

"I'm awful sorry," said Janey ; "brothers is such wild injuns, none of the girls that's got 'em likes 'em."

"Have any of them got such dear little creatures as this one is?"

"I don't know ; they's mostly bigger. That's the kind that has to be trotted and pounded ; that's the worst kind," and Janey looked savagely at the new-comer.

"What do they have to be pounded for?" asked the old lady.

"To get 'em to sleep, ma'am ; fixed wind gets in 'em, and they has to be pounded to get it out ; they are real horrid."

"Evidently one is never too old to learn," thought Mrs. Montgomerie, trying to preserve a proper gravity.

"I am sorry to hear you talk so, Janey ; this little baby cannot do as much for itself as a kitten ; I want you to help take care of him. If you are kind to him, he will love you, and you will have a good little brother. If you are

cross to him, he will be cross too. Perhaps the girls who have such bad brothers were cross to them."

"I guess they wus! He is good now."

"That is because Lucy is so kind to him; it frightens babies when anyone is cross."

Janey seemed somewhat impressed, and followed Lucy to the laundry to witness the bathing and dressing of the unwelcome brother.

Mrs. Montgomerie returned to Kate; in the hall she met John, who was waiting to know what to do next. He had been to the parsonage, "as missus said, I was ter," and from there Sarah sent him to Morton's, telling him that Mr. and Mrs. Thornton had been there all night, and that Richard had gone off, so that there was no way to get them home to breakfast. Sarah was in great distress about it, so, said he, "I drove to Morton's, and there was Mr. Thornton watchin' for somebody to come by to take Mrs. Thornton home. He was mortal glad I got thar, he put Mrs. Thornton and the children in, in no time, and said I wus to go ter the parsnige. Sudden ses Mrs. Thornton, ses she, 'John, drive to Burnside,' and so I did. Now I think I'd better go back to Morton's."

"Yes, John, and find Mr. Thornton somewhere, and tell him that Mrs. Thornton is here, and I will keep her all day. Better stop and tell Sarah too."

Mrs. Montgomerie went back to the kitchen. "Lucy, evidently Mrs. Thornton has had no breakfast; as soon as you can, send up something nice for her—coffee and broiled chicken will do."

Lucy's special pride was in answering sudden calls upon her genius, and before long breakfast waited Kate's waking. This was not long delayed; she woke somewhat refreshed, and delighted the heart of Mrs. Montgomerie by enjoying her coffee and chicken, and by regaining her own bright look once more. Until she had eaten, she

was not allowed to speak, and then she recounted her experiences in a way that made her friend's heart ache.

"The illness, you know, is fearful ; hardly a house of the operatives unattacked. We have everything systematized, and if our strength holds out, think that the worst will soon be over. Removing the children is very important ; we have them quartered everywhere, and so far this plan has been a success. Yesterday I was all day going from place to place, relieving those who were weary, and doing what else I could. At last I returned to a late dinner, thinking the day's work over ; James was tired out, the horse was put up, and we were striving to change the current of our thoughts for a while. Suddenly, about ten o'clock the bell rang, and we were summoned to Morton's. Ellen was ill, and her husband had delirium tremens. They have not had the fever, and it seemed too aggravating for a man to add the horrors of drink to all the rest ! The messenger said he heard groans, and finding no one was there, came for us. Richard put the horse in, in a few moments, and drove us there ; we then sent him home, for the horse was as tired as we, and said we would walk back.

"It was a dreadful scene. Morton had struck Ellen, and she was on the floor, insensible, and he was temporarily sobered by fright. We got her to bed in the other room, locked the door to be safe from her husband, while James went for Sarah Duffy. The situation was rather alarming to me, fearing Ellen would die, and that her husband would break down the door. However neither happened, James returned with Sarah, and in his wonderful way calmed Morton, and got him to bed. It suddenly occurred to me that if Ellen died, her husband might be accused of murder, so, without letting James know, I went out of the back door to Patrick Quinn's, where I knew Dr. Berry was. It was not far and the snow gave light, so don't look so shocked, dear grandma."

"Kate, dear, if I were not certain that you will be cared for by a surer protection than our love can give you, I would not have a moment's peace."

"Nothing harmed me, there was no one out; I found Dr. Berry, and he returned with me. He gave something quieting to Morton, to the great relief of James, and then examined Ellen. Her husband had struck her head, but neither that nor the fall seemed to have injured her; there were other difficulties from which she had suffered for a long time, and which clearly caused her death."

"Death! Is she dead?"

"Yes, she died immediately after the birth of her child. She was unconscious all the time, but Dr. Berry was positive that, although the blow caused her insensibility, she would have died just the same. I am thankful that I thought to go for him, we might have had a trial for murder to go through with. There is another comfort: Ellen was a Christian, a good, true, conscientious Christian. Very ignorant, but with a simple trust that seemed to bear her up in troubles that would have crushed her without."

"Thank God for that, Kate; had you seen her lately?"

"Yes, I was there a few days before. Morton was doing well then, and she was hopeful and comparatively happy. She was always happy when he treated her well, and unless possessed by the demon of drink he generally did so. Amid all the horrors of the night, Sarah Duffy was her own odd self, nearly convulsing me with her speeches. The last was, 'I declare it's real discouraging, when a mother goes out just as her child comes in.' I had become so overworked and nervous—fancy my strong nerves giving way—that I took refuge with James, and frightened him by a hysterical spasm of laughter. I believe he thought I had lost my mind, for he looked at me in that odd, inquiring way of his, at which May always laughs."

"Your experiences as a bride are somewhat unusual," said the old lady, taking Kate's hand.

"Bride ! Was I ever a bride ? I feel as if I had always been married, and had always taken care of sick people !"—and Kate passed her hand over her eyes, as if to shut out some of the scenes of the last month.

"I shall take you in hand, my dear ; I have sent to tell Mr. Thornton where you are, for here you are to stay till you are rested."

"Oh, that reminds me to tell you why I came. It was late when I frightened James so, and soon after, John's welcome bells jingled at the door. I wrapped up the baby and waked Janey, who had slept all night on the floor by the fire, and started for home. On the way I felt so weary and faint that I wanted *you*, dear, faithful friend, and told John to drive here. You know the rest."

"My precious child, I know all. I have sent to your husband and to Sarah that you are here. Now go up to my quiet room, there is a bright wood fire, the sofa is beside it ; go then, and sleep until all this nervous exhaustion is relieved. You only need sleep, and its blessed forgetfulness, for a few hours to bring you to yourself again."

Kate was glad to go, for the nervous system which she had prided herself on always keeping under control, had asserted its power in a very troublesome way. The scenes of the past night were continually coming back to her, the dying mother, the intoxicated father, the helpless infant, seemed to be burned in her brain. At last she slept.

When she waked, her husband had been watching for an hour by her side, and the blessed refreshment of his untiring love helped to restore her as much as the sleep had done.

"My work seems over for to-day, my darling," he said ; "we will stay here and enjoy this peace and quiet."

Kate did not care to sleep again, but remained on the

sofa, feeling the novel effect of overwrought nerves in extreme weakness. This day of rest was a comfort to them all, and their hostess made much of the "ill-wind" that had brought her so much good.

The unfortunate baby and little Jane found a temporary home with the woman who took charge of the Burnside dairy, and their father seemed thoroughly sobered by the loss of his good and faithful wife; he finally sent for a sister to take care of his house, and on solemn promises of amendment, was permitted to have his children again. The fever abated by degrees, and life resumed its usual conditions at Brighton.

Once more the velvet-covered book was again opened, and a few more pages written.

"Oh! most misnamed book, the entries are weeks apart; and yet I am glad I made no record of the suffering of this winter. It is almost over; the tyranny of fever is past. There have been about thirty deaths. All have escaped who nursed the sick, some with slight attacks, some entirely. Among these last I can number—most thankfully—our little circle. James was indefatigable, watching, talking, praying, pleading to the end. Night work was as familiar to him as day work. When possible, he conscientiously slept as many hours as his anxious mind would permit, but nothing was done regularly in regard to our comforts. Sarah always had food ready; we ate it when we could. Now that we have returned to three meals a day, served in the usual style, they seem strangely ceremonious. May is with us again, well and strong as ever: she says she did not break down, because she dismissed all other care. 'It is the trying to do too many things at once, my dear,' she said, in her wise way, 'that kills us poor women.' Aunt Alice looks tired, and is still anxious about our little angel child, Ellie. She is so good, and pure, and gentle, we feared she might

die young, like good children in the Sunday-school books; yet so far she only is threatened with illness. At Burnside, the old hospitalities are resumed, and each servant is in position again.

“For myself—what shall I say? Am I better for all this trouble? I have gained in patience, and have learned to be taken from my occupations without regret. This is really one step onward. I used to like to accomplish certain duties each day; I have learned to give up myself and my time according to the precept which hangs over James’ study-table, ‘Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.’ I listen for His will more than I did. I am thankful, too, to Him who has spared those whom I love. There were lessons taught by those who felt that each hour lost by illness was so much money lost—lessons taught by the love and tenderness that we saw amid repulsive surroundings, and—but I will not go over some of the scenes. The world will never be quite so beautiful to me again. James reminded me of the exquisite flowers that rise in beauty from unsightly soil—yes, that is true.

“But what I have best learned is of my husband. His mental and his moral strength was everywhere shown in the strange power he had over all; they all yielded to him. Amid all his anxiety, he was never impatient; then he always watched my coming and going, trying to save me from fatigue. . . . I must go. May has sent for me to come to Aunt Alice. Ellie is ill.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

PHEBE JONES.

After this last page in the journal Kate prepared hastily, telling Sarah to explain to Mr. Thornton that she might be detained all night, and he was not to be anxious nor to come unless she sent for him. "He will be tired, you know, Sarah," she said.

"Yes, 'um," returned Sarah, "I'll see as he ain't worried, though I don't know of no power that will keep 'im in when you are out."

"Try your best," returned Kate, with a smile, as she went out upon the snow-covered path. The walk to Waterside was long, but she enjoyed the sharp crisp air, and thoroughly protected by furs, she defied the cold. On her way she was stopped by a boy. "Is Mr. Thornton to hum?" he asked.

"No, he has gone to the city, and will not return till the last train."

"Wall, that's bad, fur father got a message from Mrs. Joy, who lives close to Phebe Jones, saying as how Phebe was dyin', and wants to see Mr. Thornton pertickler. She ain't so dredful poor, but no one lives on the hill but Mrs. Joy, and she's poor enuf. The boy that carts down wood told father, an' he says there ain't no time to lose, 'cause she can't live till mornin', and must see the parsin."

"I will send someone up," said Mrs. Thornton. It was past three o'clock, and felt like snow; she walked as fast as possible, trying to think of someone to go. When she

reached Waterside, the children were out, Mrs. Ray was asleep, and May watched beside Ellie, who was better. May put her finger to her lips as Kate entered. There was no one to consult. She went over to Mrs. Herndon; she and Norah were out. There was nothing to be done but to go herself, if John could take her in the sleigh.

"Sartin, I'll go," said he; "'tain't no slouch work climbin' the mounting best o' times; and thar's snow in the aar. Like 'nuff we'll be ketched; but I'm your man."

"Mr. Thornton will not be home till eleven o'clock," said Kate; "he could not drive up then."

"I see. Well, we'll try it. It will be a tejus job, with the snow a-drivin' in our faces, as it will be, sure. Better come right along; bring all you'll want to eat—something real *fillin'*—'tain't much provender grows 'round Phebe's."

"I'll be ready in ten minutes," replied Kate. She ran back, and May met her in the hall. A few words explained the situation, and her wish to save her husband from the fatigue.

"It is ten miles, and bitterly cold," said May.

"The colder it is, and the farther it is, the more important it is to prevent James from going—particularly after being in the heated cars. But I have no time to talk. I must rob the pantry, and write a note to James."

May looked aghast, then quietly said: "I will go with you, Kate."

Her sister was too much comforted by this to refuse. They placed Jane beside Ellie, told her there was a note for Mr. Thornton on the parlor table, explaining everything, then hastily filling a basket and putting on all the available coverings, they packed themselves in the sleigh.

Presently the snow began to fall.

"I knowed it wud," said John; "it was a-dancin' and a-prancin' in the aar. Get up, old bones." A slight reminder of a whip started the horses.

"Sally ain't noways fond o' snow ; I dunno as Tom keers." And John managed their heads as he would the helm of a vessel.

"They'll miss the team," he continued, "and Mrs. Herndon will be sure to go to the cottage, so don't be a worryin' about nothin'. If anybody kin git thar we kin."

"I'm sure of that, John, but it is very cold." And Kate turned her back to the wind.

"Kate," observed May, from the depths of a buffalo robe, "I think this is a scrape."

"It is not precisely a frolic," returned her sister ; "your coming was pure good fortune to me."

"As if I could have done anything else ! Jim would have lost faith in me."

"Gee up !—look out, Tom !" and a lurch nearly upset them. "The snow is deeper up here ; I can't see the stones—hold hard !" and they pitched over another. "All safe now ; here we begin the mounting ; pull away, Tom !—get along, Sal !"

"Kate"—from deeps below—"I hope Jim will not know where we have gone."

"I was serenely hoping he would," said his wife.

"'Where ignorance is bliss'——'The proverb is something musty.' Where did you put the note ?" returned May.

"On the exact centre of the parlor table."

If Mrs. Thornton had seen the servant at that moment set the lamp, before she lighted it, exactly upon the note, her mind would have been less at ease.

"I'm doing my duty," she said, holding up her muff to screen her face, which was so stiffened she could hardly speak.

"No, you are doing Jim's ; I am doing mine—I'm sure of that."

"But, May, Jim's duty and mine are the same."

"No," said May. "Jim might like a furious storm in which to do his work—there is a pleasant flavor of martyrdom about it—but I doubt if he would choose it for you."

"I am thankful it is I, in this sleigh, and not James," said Kate, with decision. "By the by, what is the rest of that proverb?"

"Where ignorance is——"

"No, no, I mean what *Hamlet* says—'While the grass grows'—it is there the words 'the proverb is something musty' come in."

Jim once asked an old Dane named Paulus—a porter—if he ever heard a proverb beginning in that way. His answer was remarkable. 'In my countree,' he said, 'there is a proverb, "while the grass grows the cow dies."' That settled it; but really, Kate, I am unequal to literary researches with the mercury utterly below discovery. Thank you, however, for your effort to raise my spirits."

Kate laughed as responsively as she could under the difficulties, letting the conversation drop for the present.

"Wall, I say, now, we've come a good piece. We ain't got no more level road; sleighin' up a mounting ain't no easy work for driver or for druv," and John sighed from the very nails of his boots.

"Oh, John!" exclaimed Mrs. Thornton, "I forgot to tell you to smoke."

"Thank ye! thank ye kindly, ladies; I was a-longin' fur my pipe. I never spares no money on my terbacker; maybe you'll like it."

The pipe did not prove offensive, and the air was so cold that efforts at conversation were not resumed. They slowly ascended the "mounting."

"Som'eres here," said John, "thar ought to be a bars—thar ain't no gate to Phebe's. I'll—ha! hum! I can't see a—hum!—thing!" and John was nearly betrayed into unseemly language.

The air was so thick with snow that it was impossible to see ; but the faithful horses turned at the right place.

" Ah ! you're the stock team ; they knows straight as a fish-hook," and the dim outline of a house appeared in the midst of a waste of snow.

" Here we air. Dunno as our troubles is over, or jest begun," said John, encouragingly, as he stopped the horses and jumped down into the snow.

" Don't git out till I make a path "—for the accomplishment of which he kicked furiously, right and left ; then, lighting his lantern, disappeared in an open door. The occupants of the sleigh vainly tried to see something.

" Oh ! I wish it never would be dark," said Kate ; " even that lantern is a comfort."

John was kicking his path in order again.

" You'll hev to git eout here," he said ; " there ain't no fire, and the snow is blew all inter the wash'us. Come in ; I'll find wood."

" Did you see Phebe ? " asked May.

" Land sakes, no ! *she'll* keep this weather ; wait till I make *you* comfetable."

" May ! how dreadful ! "

But May was plunging into the snow, striving to follow John's footsteps, which the wind obliterated as fast as he made them. Kate struggled after her. They entered through the snow-bank in the wash-house ; fortunately, the kitchen door was closed. They opened it by the dim light of John's lantern, and felt a slightly warmer atmosphere. There were a few embers on the hearth, but no fire. John followed with wood, and soon prepared it ; the wood was wet, and uncommonly unwilling to burn.

" Ef it 'ad been a house afire, thar'd 'ave been no stoppin' it," said John, sententiously.

" Let me blow it," said May, taking the bellows.

" All right," said John, " I'll see to the critters," his phi-

losophy telling him that the ladies would be sooner warm if they worked at the fire themselves. He took the lantern, and save an occasional spire of flame, the darkness was total. Suddenly above the roaring of the storm and the creaking of the boards a fearful groan resounded through the house. Kate was past speaking ; she trembled in every limb, and May crouched down beside her, with teeth chattering, as she tried to say :

“It’s Phebe, of course, and shows she is alive.”

“I never heard anything so horrible. Oh, May ! do blow the fire ; if she groans again, while it is so dark, I shall scream.”

Fortunately, John’s cheery voice, talking to his horses, was the next sound ; he was bringing them into the wash-house, and the stamping and clatter was tremendous ; he opened the door, which, with the lantern, restored the courage of the terrified girls.

“Thar warn’t no barn,” he explained, “so I hed to bring ’em in here. Seems to me it’s kinder pleasant to hear ’em.”

“It’s *perfectly delightful*,” said Kate—a remark at which she afterward laughed.

“Ain’t had much success with your fire”—and John, without ceremony, broke up two chairs and put the pieces under the wet wood. A bright flame was the result, and the fainting hearts took courage. They tried to warm themselves, while John returned to the horses, who, with the wonderful common-sense accorded to them, were quite contented with their new quarters, taking their oats as composedly out of the sink as if they had always done so.

John had his hands full. “Sich a fix,” he soliloquized—“it’s worse nor a piknik.”

Another deep groan from Phebe roused Kate from her seat on the hearth.

“Can you find me a candle, John ?”

"Wait a minit," he said. "I'll skeer up Phebe fust. I knows her; and I'll tell her you've come."

It was a welcome proposition on John's part.

"How *lovely* he is," said Kate, as they heard him stumbling about with the lantern; but she could not imagine what made May laugh.

"Hallo, Phebe," he called. "Hallo! where be you? We've come to call. Speak to a feller, can't you?"

"May, I agree with you—this *is* a scrape," whispered Kate. "Listen!"

He seemed to go up-stairs, Phebe not being found on the first floor. As John had no idea of lowering his voice for the invalid, they heard his comforting words.

"Wall, I never! You air bad off. Perk up now; I've brought our ladies to see you."

A low murmur was heard.

"Wall! 'tis bad, an' no mistake. Whar's your candle? Don't wonder you felt dismal—thar, that's cheerful. You want a fire, don't you? I'll hev one in a minit. No, Mr. Thornton ain't here—it's his wife and sister"—and John stumbled down again.

"She's most gone," he said. "You jes' go up an' talk to her; thar ain't no time to lose. Dunno as you want any to lose," and John laughed at his joke, as he filled his arms with wood for her fire. "I'll see to supper," he said, "eatin' is warmin'."

"I'll go up, May," said Kate, gathering together her nervous forces—"and you will find something in the basket; bring up whatever is best for her."

She followed the gleam of the candle, and soon stood beside the dying woman.

She was comfortably covered, and had not been long alone, or without fire. A neighbor had been with her in the morning, but went to her children just before the storm.

"I am sorry to find you so ill," began Kate.

"Water," was the answer. Kate found some, and raising Phebe's head, she drank it.

"I can speak better now. I have much to say. Are you sent by James Thornton?"

"I am his wife; he was not at home, so I came; and his sister is with me."

"Little May?"

"Yes," returned Kate, much surprised.

"Call her."

"She will come in a few minutes—she is making some tea for you. John will make the fire now."

The woman was silent. May came up with the tea. John made the fire, and found and lighted a lamp. The situation was improved. Phebe was revived by the tea, and began again:

"Are you James Thornton's sister?"

"I am," said May. "What do you wish to tell me?"

"Listen; I cannot speak much. I kept a small inn in Liverpool. Your father came there with his wife and two children—he was on his way to America. He was ill. I stole a small bag—it contained his money and his papers, with directions how to go to his father's house. I could not return the papers without being suspected. He died the next day. I know it killed him. He would not have lived long anyway."

"Stop and rest," said May, giving her more tea.

"Don't you hate me?" asked Phebe.

"No, indeed. It is all past now; but I would like to hear all you can tell me."

"It's a short story. I was sorry after he died, but I needed the money. I had hard work to keep body and soul together. I helped your mother to sell her clothes; she had fine clothes, but they were old; more drink, cold—I'm burning up inside."

They did what they could for her, and she continued her story :

"I sold the clothes for nearly enough to pay your passages ; I made up the rest from the stolen money. I thought you would be rich enough in America, and that things were not even. I was so wretched ! I saw you on the vessel, and shuddered when your mother thanked me. The money did me no good. I never had another peaceful day. I used to see you starving in my dreams ; in my sleep I never thought of your rich friends."

"I am very sorry for you," said May.

"You don't expect me to believe that. You ought to want to kill me. After two years I lost everything. I came to America, but never could find your mother. I tried to find the place that the papers spoke of, but could not understand them. I called myself Phebe Jones. My name is Howson. I went out to service. The people here pay well. I laid up money, then bought this place two years ago, because I heard a James Thornton was preaching at Brighton. I went to hear him : his father stood before me. I thought he knew me, and hurried home. I did not dare to think about religion till I was ready to confess my sin."

She turned deadly pale ; they gave her restoratives, which she had difficulty in swallowing.

"Do not try to speak again till you are rested," said Kate. "Now that you have confessed, will you not think about what you call religion, and ask forgiveness for your sins."

"Have none but that one," she whispered.

"We all sin," said Mrs. Thornton.

"Never—did—any—harm—but that. Paid regular—did duty—stayed by husband—till—black and blue."

John came up then, and said he would sit by Phebe while they went down to eat something.

"Go," said Phebe ; " I will rest."

They went to the kitchen, where the roaring of the immense fire overcame the noise of the outside tempest ; the kettle was boiling, coffee, bread and butter, and a warmed-up chicken on the table. The horses whinnied cheerfully as they heard the voices.

"How perfectly delightful !" said Kate, as she went first to pat the horses.

"Better than John ?" asked May.

They indulged in a ghost of a laugh, and were much benefited and refreshed by John's skill in cooking. They talked awhile about Phebe's revelations, then went to her again, while John took his turn at the table.

The night passed at her bedside ; several times they thought she was gone, but she struggled back to life again, with a longing that she might feel surer of her claims to future peace. They were very faithful to the poor woman. Kate succeeded in convincing her that each moral being is responsible for the performance of two sets of duties, one to God and one to man, and that no general fulfilment of the duty to our fellow-creatures fulfils our positive duty to God. Phebe querulously asked :

"What haven't I done, I'd like to know ?"

Kate replied in the simple words : "There are two commandments ; have you kept them both ? 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind ; and thy neighbor as thyself.' "

Phebe was quiet a long time after this ; at last they heard her sobbing ; then beside the dying bed, and with the deep bass of the raging storm, Kate's superb voice rose above all other sounds :

"Just as I am, Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down,
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come."

“ ‘Thy love unknown,’ ” whispered Phebe. “I thought the Lord was hard on me ; Mrs. Montgomerie said he died for such as I, but I tried to forget it. I know now ; it was his love unknown.”

“ ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,’ ” repeated Kate.

“That means, know what He did.”

“If a physician prepares medicine, and says, ‘This will cure you,’ what does he mean?”

“To take it,” she replied.

“When the Lord says He will save you if you believe, does He only mean to know that He died for you?”

“Oh ! you press me hard. Sing.”

Together they sung verse after verse :

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

With one mighty effort, Phebe raised herself in bed, and in a deep, sepulchral voice joined in the closing words :

“When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne.
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

John left his bed of buffalo robes by the fire and came up. Phebe fell back ; she was dead, and on her countenance was *peace*.

The storm still raged ; daylight struggled with the clouds. The snow was deep around them—desolation had crushed all nature’s gladness ; but they had gained that for which they came, and as May watched beside Kate she was thankful for the prompt decision that had brought them there. The words came to her :

“Esteeming sorrow—whose employ
Is to develop, not destroy—
Far better than a barren joy.”

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SEARCH.

Mr. Thornton went directly from the depot to Water-side, to see about Ellie ; she was better, and Mrs. Ray was beside her. After a few words about the child, he asked if his wife had been there.

"Oh, yes," she said ; "there is a note somewhere for you. Stop, I will tell you : Kate came while I was asleep, and when I woke Jane said that she and May, who was here, had taken blankets and food, and gone with John Brace in the large sleigh, and that Mrs. Thornton had left a note on the parlor table for you."

"I cannot find it!" exclaimed Mr. Thornton, who reached the parlor before Mrs. Ray finished. She ran down to assist in the search, but it availed nothing. She even raised the lamp, but the treacherous note had clung to the bottom of it, as if determined on secrecy.

"Mrs. Herndon came in," said Mrs. Ray, hoping to give comfort, "and said that John took a bag of oats with him ; but she was not at home when he went."

"How can I find out where they are ? Kate may want me to join them."

"Perhaps they are home again—no, May would have returned here. It must be some case of sudden illness. Oh ! where is that note ? Stop at the Herndons, and see if John has got back."

But Mr. Thornton was in his sleigh, and the words followed him through the snow-storm.

Mrs. Herndon put her head out of the window at his call.

"No, I don't know a thing about 'em. John took oats, and he's pretty safe. I don't believe he'll upset 'em. There's a sharp turn 'long near the hotel, but I don't believe any harm's come to 'em."

After this encouragement, Mr. Thornton drove home. Sarah was watching; she heard him say:

"Give the horse feed, Richard, and have him back as soon as you can."

"Now you're worryin' about Miss Kate; she's went to Waterside, and left word you warn't to follow under no consideration;" and Kate's message lost nothing in repetition.

"I have been there," he replied, accepting gladly the offered coffee and refreshments. "She and Miss May have gone in a sleigh to see some poor person; I am going to them."

"Well, that is the craziest idea! As if they wouldn't be glad enough to come home when they get through!" and Sarah went off to see about Richard's storm-coat, all the time expressing her general disgust with the way poor people had taken to "kicking up such a mess; all creation can't cure 'em and feed 'em!" she exclaimed, recalling with a sigh the comfortable and well-behaved poor of the town of D—.

As Richard and his master faced the pitiless storm, the good sexton proposed Sarah Duffy: "She'll know if any one is ill," he said.

The brave horse went off as if conscious of a new emergency, and Sarah's mansion was soon reached. The house was dark, but Mr. Thornton pounded at the door, in a way that showed him careless of alarming the much persecuted maiden. A window flew up, the shutters burst open—one of them came down with a crash, and just failed of killing the regardless intruder.

"Bless us an' save us! My sakes alive! What under the canopy's the matter now?" ejaculated Miss Duffy.

"Is Mrs. Thornton here?" was the only question he could think of, between the descent of the snow and the shutter.

"For the land's sake! Have you lost her?" came from above.

"No, she has gone to see some sick person. The note she left has been lost. Do you know who is ill or dying?" he shouted, as the wind threatened the life of the other shutter.

Miss Duffy would "stand no more such foolin'," so she held it with a strong hand, as she screamed back again: "I don't know a livin' creetur who's dyin' now. Like enough she's safe somewhere."

The storm precluded pursuing the conversation for pleasure, so Mr. Thornton shouted: "Shall Richard bring the shutter up?"

"No, 'tain't no matter. It's been actin' like one possessed all winter, and I jest hope it's satisfied now."

The window banged down, and the good woman went back to bed, soliloquizing: "I believe some folks like to go round wakin' other folks up. It's real discouraging to be bounced out of one's first nap. I'm half froze, too. Law! Mrs. Thornton 'ill come back. What a row he made, to be sure."

"Now try the hotel," said Mr. Thornton.

The sleepy porter knew nothing of any sick family; he saw John Brace drive by in his sleigh about four o'clock.

"In which direction?"

"Up north," was the reply.

As the road branched three times in the next mile it was useless to follow the sleigh.

"Drive to Brightside next," said Mr. Thornton.

"It's past twelve o'clock ; hadn't you better give over, Master Jeems ?" said Richard.

"Mrs. Thornton may be expecting me ; I will ask advice, if Mr. Montgomerie is up."

A bright light gleamed from the library window of Brightside.

"My dear friend, what is the matter ?" exclaimed Mr. Montgomerie, as he opened the door on the pale face of Mr. Thornton. "I knew the bells ; what can I do ?"

The case was soon stated, and his friend's cool judgment helped his bewildered pastor.

"Undoubtedly Mrs. Thornton has had a sudden summons. She made careful arrangements. May has gone with her. John is a host in himself—he has two strong horses and a good sleigh. They have taken provisions and oats for the horses ; the lost note must have been to tell you not to come. Mrs. Thornton wished to save you a long drive. Do not disappoint her by exhausting yourself. I am sure I am right."

Mr. Thornton in his anxiety had lost the power of judgment, but tried to accept this solution.

"I will go home with you," said his friend ; "I will not leave you until all is right again."

Sarah was greatly relieved at their return, for it was a new anxiety to have "all the family careering round in the awfulest snow-storm ever sent on this wicked earth, like as if heaven and earth is coming together ;" and she prepared the coffee with new alacrity, with the comfort of having some of them once more inside. Mr. Thornton was induced to try to sleep, and Mr. Montgomerie managed to obtain a private interview with Richard, in which he told him to send early to Waterside, as possibly the missing note might have been found.

The servant found it when she trimmed the lamp in the morning, and by the time they had finished breakfast Mr.

Thornton knew where his wife and sister had passed the night.

On the mountain John Brace looked out at dawn upon a hopeless scene. The fresh snow was more than a foot deep, and had drifted in huge masses. It still snowed, though the wind came now only in fitful gusts.

“One dead woman an’ two live ones, two horses an’ me ; nothin’ plenty but snow, an’ that’s as thick as blackberries. Dunno as ever I was in sich a fix before ! I can’t leave ’em—they’d be skeered out of their wits : an’ we’ll all be starved to death if somebody don’t come. ’Tain’t altogether jes’ as I like it.”

As John surveyed the situation, a curl of smoke rose in the air. He had forgotten there was one other house on the hill. He patted the horses, closed the wash-house door after him, and fought his way across the field to Mrs. Joy’s house. She hailed his coming with :

“Why, John Brace ! you don’t say it’s you ? I heard the bells last night, and saw the light in Phebe’s window, so I was easy about her ; did she get through ?”

“She’s dead,” said John ; “an’ I’ve got Mrs. an’ Miss Thornton to pervide for, an’ sich an uneven snow I never did see. Dunno as we will get to hum in a week.”

“Law !” said Mrs. Joy, “I want to know ?”

“S’pose I fetch the ladies over here, an’ you an’ I ’tend to Phebe ; what d’ye say ?”

“Sure ! the children have had their breakfast. I can go as well as not. Joy won’t be home till Saturday, so I’ll do all I can.”

She put her shawl over her head, and with some difficulty reached Phebe’s.

“Good land ! have you got the horses in here ?” exclaimed Mrs. Joy, stamping off the snow.

“Guess I wouldn’t have any horses if I’d have left ’em

outside. Come in the kitchen. Here's Mrs. Joy, Miss May ; she'll git things straight for you."

May shook hands, and felt as if she would like to kiss her, so welcome was the sight.

"Mrs. Thornton is asleep on the sofa—she fainted after Phebe died ; and I'm trying to get the kettle to boil—we must have some breakfast," she said.

Mrs. Joy went to work with most encouraging vigor, and breakfast was soon ready. Kate came out looking weary and worn beyond expression.

"Mrs. Joy has come to help us," said May.

"We are most thankful for help," replied Kate ; "it was a very hard night for us both, and the prospect to-day is not bright."

"Well, I should say not," said Mrs. Joy, looking with interest at the clergyman's wife. "We would have sent for Mr. Sayres down to Weston, but nothing would content Phebe but Mr. Thornton ; she said she knew his people in England."

"Mr. Thornton was in New York, that is why we came ; I am glad we were here."

"Don't worry no more—I'll do for her now," said the kind-hearted woman, who had already taken care of her for several weeks.

"What a perfectly lovely woman !" said Kate.

At this May laughed.

"You have been very fortunate on this excursion, Kate," she said ; but Kate was too tired to understand ; she gazed wearily out of the window.

"Are you expecting Jim ?"

"Not consciously, only imagining how glad I would be to see him."

"If he can get here, he will come. John says the only way to return is to drive to Weston and take the cars from there. Jim can come that way."

"What is the matter with our road?"

"It is probably impassable; there are deep ditches and tremendous drifts; the wind was that side of the hill. Look at that mound; John turned the sleigh against a wood-pile, and the snow is four feet deep over it."

"Sleigh-bells," exclaimed John, putting his head in at the door, while the horses began to neigh. "The storm is slackin' down; they're comin' from Weston."

Slowly they came—sometimes they stopped; at last the horses' heads were seen, then the sleigh drove up.

In a moment Kate was in her husband's arms, and May welcoming Mr. Montgomerie, and the Rev. Mr. Sayres, from Weston.

Explanations were made, and Mr. Thornton went to talk with Mrs. Joy. She told him all she knew about Phebe, and gave him a paper which she said was Phebe's will, witnessed by her and her husband the previous week.

The only words in it were:

"All I own I leave to James and May Thornton.

"PHEBE (JONES) HOWSON."

Mr. Thornton was rather amazed; but as there was no one to dispute her wishes, he was obliged to accept whatever her property might prove to be.

He made a hasty survey of her effects, and took possession of a box of papers directed to him; then, being exceedingly anxious to get his wife and sister home, he engaged Mrs. Joy to take charge of the house until the roads would permit him to come up again. Meanwhile, Mr. Sayres would attend to the funeral; it was explained to him that Mr. Thornton had been sent for because Phebe knew his father and mother in England.

"In fact," said Mr. Thornton, "I remember stopping at the inn she kept in Liverpool, and that the death of my father took place there."

Kate whispered enough of Phebe's revelations to confine

his reminiscences to this. Mr. Sayres was satisfied, and all arrangements concluded, so that the Thornton family were released.

John offered to wait for Mr. Sayres; Mr. Montgomerie returned with the Thorntons. It was a dangerous drive, but safely accomplished in time for the train to Brighton, which soon landed them at the station.

May, whose strength seemed to be equal to all demands upon it, went directly to Waterside, having told her brother more particulars about Phebe, though there was not time for the whole story.

When they reached the parsonage, Kate made a great effort to go to her room, where Sarah, without questions, helped her to undress, and persuaded her to lie down. The comfort and rest were grateful to her, and the loving smile with which she turned to her husband, and the wonderful brilliancy of her eyes, relieved the load of anxiety he had borne for so many hours.

Sarah had to ask Mr. Montgomerie where the missing ones were found, and about the hard ride and anxious night which they had.

"Mrs. Thornton will be ill, mark my words," said Sarah. "You see, it's all been too much for her. Besides the nursing and broken nights, she's ever been anxious about Master Jeems, and I tell you, Mr. Montgomerie, it's worry that breaks women down. It's safe to scrub all day, but not to worry half a one. She was that miserable after the Morton fuss! For my part, I don't see that there's any call to take charge of all creation. She'll have a low fever, mark my words."

Mr. Montgomerie refused to take this dreary view of the case, but went to Burnside to confer with his mother, who did not lose a moment in reaching the parsonage, and in sending for May. Her son asked why she was so alarmed.

"Because I know Kate ; her emotional nature will not bear being wound up to such a pitch. She is like a good clock, and will bear a good deal ; but when the main-spring is wound too tight, she can go no longer."

As they entered the house, strange laughter met their ears. Kate was in raving delirium.

It was agonizing to those who so dearly loved her. Her delirious laughter was terrible, but it was worse to hear of the horrible sights and sounds that passed through her mind ; she would go over the night at Morton's, would climb the hill to Phebe's, would tell of the dying woman and the horrors of the dark house, and nearly break her husband's heart by saying :

"If I can only save him, and keep him from coming."

Mrs. Montgomerie and May were fertile in expedients for relief. The room was kept brilliantly lighted, and this seemed to comfort her. Then May tried music, and sung by the hour ; while she sung Kate was quiet. If her husband sung, she burst into tears—"There, he has come after all, and he is so tired ;" but all the while she held his hand. He never left her, though the veins stood in knots on his broad, fair forehead, and his whole countenance was convulsed with suffering.

By degrees the overwrought brain became composed ; then the exhaustion and stillness were almost as hard to bear as the excited condition. For hours even the breathing was scarcely perceptible. Only for his Sunday duties was her husband away from her. Everyone spared him—one of his parishioners even deferred his marriage, and all were ready to do whatever was possible.

Weeks passed ; then one day Kate opened her eyes with her own beautiful light in them, and put out her hand to her husband. He was afraid to speak, but fell on his knees with a fervent "I thank thee, my Father."

"I have had a dreadful dream," she said ; "part of the

time angels sung to me ; then they floated away, and horrors surrounded me. It is all over now. How weak I am ; I do not generally wake like this."

"My darling, your dream has been illness. It is nearly a month since it began."

"You must be mistaken, dear ; we came down the mountain, and—ask May."

"It is nearly a month ago, Kate. See, it is spring-time now ; listen to the birds."

"I do not understand," she said, wearily, closing her eyes again in healthy, dreamless sleep.

When she again woke, her mind was clear, and only the body weak.

Her recovery was rapid ; soon she could sit up and feel anxious in her turn for those who had watched her.

"Sister dear," she said to May, "you are tired and grave."

"I will soon be rested, Kate. Life has come to me this winter in a new phase. I am grave, and feel old."

"You need change. How would you like to go to Cuba with Aunt Alice ?"

"I would rather stay here ; it is late for Cuba. Aunt Alice goes for Ellie, you know."

"The sunbeam shall not fade from the eyes of little May. I will soon be down again, and everything shall be cheerful," said Kate.

May smiled, and said : "It shall not fade."

That afternoon Mr. Thornton was sitting beside his wife, gazing in her dear eyes, and watching the fitful color as she spoke.

"What troubles May, dear ? She is often in deep thought and restless."

"Are you not mistaken, Kate ? She has done little this winter but care for the sick ; no wonder she is grave. Nothing can trouble her now you are well."

Kate laughed at this.

"She is coming now," she said ; "take her to walk ; perhaps she will tell you."

Jim and little May went off arm-in-arm. Kate followed with her eyes as far as she could see. On the walk May confided to Jim her trouble.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MAY'S TROUBLE.

"I have opened the box of papers left by Phebe Howson," said Mr. Thornton to his sister ; "there are a few letters, and the certificate of our parents' marriage. The letters explain that mother's father was a clergyman."

"That's the reason I always wanted to preach—two clerical grandfathers were too much for you alone," laughed May.

"You preach daily, little sister, and your text is *Love*."

"Go on with the papers, Jim ; my daily life is the effect of circumstances."

Jim, thus admonished, continued his story, after which May exclaimed :

"Kate was like one inspired the night Phebe died ; she was cornered by the words of the Bible, and then Kate sang like an angel."

"May," whispered her brother, in an awe-struck voice, "she is so nearly an angel it frightens me."

"Such a true ministering spirit that perhaps she will be enough for you."

"What can you mean ?"

"You do not need me as once you did."

"It would be hard to do without you, May."

"Would you mind very much if I go away ?"

"Go away ! Mind it ! I would feel cut in half."

"That's exactly how I felt when you were gone. I asked Rover how he would feel ; he wrinkled up his forehead,

and sympathized with his tongue and tail. Don't laugh, Jim ; I'm very serious !”

“ That don't prevent your making me laugh.”

“ It ought to ; I'm trying to ask you if you would mind my being married ?”

“ Married ! What on earth for ?”

“ On account of Frank,” said May, demurely.

“ What is the matter with Frank ? I had a jolly letter from him lately.”

“ He has waited so long.”

“ What for ? What does he want ?”

“ Was there ever such a darling old goose ! Frank wishes to be married—*there* !”

“ I'm sure I don't want to prevent him. What has that to do with you ?”

“ Oh, Jim ! Long ago Frank came to the old parsonage and asked me to marry him !”

“ You ! Why, May, that must have been years ago. He has been abroad ever since we have been here.”

“ Yes—years ;” and May's eyes filled with tears. “ I put him off till our grandparents died ; then he came for me, but I thought you needed me ; then came that winter ; then Kate's illness—but *now*——”

“ Oh, May, my darling, have you been bearing this separation all this time for my sake ? Why did you not tell me ? I had no idea you cared for Frank—he is so much older than you, dear—and somehow I never thought you would leave us.”

“ If I had told you, Jim, you would only have had another care, and it would have been harder for me. I told Mrs. Montgomerie, and had hard work to keep her still ; you know she is not very patient with quiet continuance in well-doing. For such an incarnation of peace she is a perfect fidget if anyone has anything to bear that she considers unnecessary. I could not make her see it as I did.”

"I cannot realize it, May. There is one comfort, Frank is the best fellow in the world—and—but I am glad that it is so hard to part with you, dear."

Then May told the whole story to her brother, and afterward repeated it all to Kate.

"How could you have kept this a secret from us?" exclaimed her sister.

"If I had not, Kate, you would have insisted that you did not need me."

Kate laughed. "I don't know what sin I might have been tempted to commit to make you happy, so I won't waste time in pretences. Now tell me more about it; where has he been so many years?"

"He was sent to London by some benevolent society here, to examine the systems of ragged schools; that was when grandmother was blind. I could do nothing but send him off indefinitely, and beg him to forget me. He accepted the appointment, but not my proposal; then he travelled for a long while. You know, dear, I could not have left you then. He knew it too, and waited—waited."

"Oh, May! if I had only known it I could have done something. Is he not ages older than you?"

"Only thirteen years; and I have grown so grave that I have quite reached him. He will not know for nearly two weeks, then two more and he will be here."

"A whole month!"

"Yes; but short in comparison to the years that have passed since——"

"Tell me your plans. Will you stay and live with us?"

"No, dear; it is really time for you to try to content yourself with Jim."

"I'll do my best," laughed Kate; "but how about Jim being content with me?"

"He will do his best too," returned May. "You will have a new bliss, and begin your honeymoon over again."

If there was only a tower for you and him to preach sermons on to each other?"

"That's pure envy. We had the very best time in the world. I am never tired of Jim's sermons," retorted Kate.

"I like them too, on Sundays; but if Frank proposes to preach to me on my wedding journey, I'll come back again. We will probably go abroad at once, first to Paris, where he has been engaged in hard work at the mission all winter; then I suppose to Switzerland, then to the East, after Palestine, Egypt; and there, Kate, you and Jim must join us."

"I am glad for you, May, indeed I am, but——" and here Kate broke down utterly, and Mrs. Montgomerie came in upon two weeping sisters.

"What *has* happened?" she exclaimed, in alarm.

"Only—May's going away, and Frank, and all that," said Kate, trying to smile.

"Take care, you foolish child; May will give it all up if you shed half a tear."

"No," said May, "not this time; Frank's last letter convinced me of a duty to him."

"A duty of which I have reminded you several times, my dear," returned her old friend, archly.

"Yes, I exonerate you from any failure to plead Frank's cause, but the nearest duty loomed up the highest. What are you bringing out Kate's hat for? where is she going?"

"I met Mr. Thornton, and he promised to go to Burnside after his visits, and I have come for his family. Here, Kate, put on your hat; come, May. Sarah, they won't want tea at home. I'll take good care of Mrs. Thornton; the drive will do her good."

"Well, well!" said Sarah, as they drove off, "she certainly is the best old lady livin' now, but my opinion is, it would be a savin' of time an' horse-flesh if they all lived in the same house. It would save gallavantin' too. I'm glad I wasn't born restless."

Richard smiled his quiet smile, but as he rather liked life and animation, did not oppose Sarah's more sedate views. It was just as well to avoid controversy with the good Sarah.

The weeks soon passed, September's golden light made hills and valleys more beautiful than even under the summer sun, and Kate gained strength each day in the excursions and drives that were planned for her benefit. May's spirits came back again, though she was a little fitful, and her brother suffered many a self-reproach because he was conscious that he wished Frank had been content to remain a friend only.

One evening May declined to go with the others to one of the many tea-parties given in honor of Kate's recovery. She passed the sunset hour in the old orchard. From a seat under a wide-spreading apple-tree there was a long view of the road to the station, half a mile distant. A steamer arrived that morning, but having heard nothing from Frank, she did not know when to expect him. She would rather have had an acknowledgment of her summons before his coming, although it was in truth only an answer to the question in each of her lover's letters ; just what her brother asked Kate so often—"Are you ready, May?" It was no shock to her maidenly dignity to say, "Yes, Frank, come." But she would have liked a letter. Certainty, as nearly as it can be attained, is comforting and soothing, as we all know. Each year had added greatly to Frank Raymond's mental and spiritual growth. It was not so much that he was thirty-five years old—"half-way home," as Willis says, "as far from childhood's morning came as to the grave's forgetful night." But he had become much more a man, a grand, noble man, in his years of waiting. She read it in his letters. She knew he had never rested in his onward and upward course, but in her humility failed to measure what the years

of self-abnegation had done for her. She feared her light-heartedness, though somewhat toned down, was a sign of want of strength of purpose ; she forgot that though "leaves are light and idle, and wavering and changeable—they even dance—yet God has made them part of the oak." Frank was grave and still when they last parted, she did not know it was only the repeated disappointments that took the smile from his heart ; her heart fell as she lifted him higher and higher, till she almost dreaded his coming. "Am I good enough, and strong enough, and brave enough, to be a help-meet in such a life-work as Frank has chosen ? I wish I had just a word before I see him again !" were her thoughts. She did not fathom the mighty depths of the man's love, he would have saved her even that momentary fear if he had known of it.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOW FRANK ACTED.

There was a distant sound of the coming of the last train, the lines of gold that laid level on the earth were gone, the sun-god gathered his robe around him as he sank to rest, and darkness fell over the scene. It was of no use to wait there ; she went back to the house. How lovely she and Kate had made it ! The pillars of the piazza were twined with vines, flowers were blooming everywhere, as they only bloom for those who love them. The windows opened to the floor, and the light from the lamp, with its amber shade, lighted the piazza as well as the library. She heard Trask's carriage rattle past. It did not stop ! "Then he has not come," she thought. She took up the evening paper to see if she was right about the steamer. Yes, there was no doubt about a steamer. There was no list of passengers ; perhaps she would have a letter. She went to the organ and began rather a sad strain. She heard no footsteps. Suddenly strong arms clasped her, and Frank's words made her forever forget her doubts : "Oh ! my darling, my darling ! It has come at last ! My May ! My little May ! My May bird ! All my own ! My precious May—oh ! how beautiful you are !" and then there was a long, long silence.

How shall I tell it ? Yet I feel that the one young reader who has plodded through all the teachings and preachings of "Jim the Parson" deserves to know exactly how it was, and just what Frank and May said and did.

The old story has so many new phases that this "one young reader" wants to know how it was acted in the little library in Jim's parsonage, beside his grandfather's old organ. So I will tell the truth, for I know all about it. As soon as May could speak, all she said was, "Oh! Frank, Frank!" It was enough that Frank was come. Then, after a while they talked a little, but Frank had, after all, *not* grown grave nor still, and May, for certain reasons, found it very difficult to finish any sentence intelligibly. At last, in a pause, she said, with one of her merry laughs, "Certainly, Frank, this is a new departure, or you are some one else——"

"No," he interrupted, "don't fear, I'm the same old Frank. This is only the result of many departures. So often I have heard you say, "Go, Frank——"

"Dear Frank," corrected May.

"Yes, I believe it was 'dear Frank,' but the 'go' took off the emphasis. So often I have heard 'go' that 'come' has fairly unsettled my reason; I am so absurdly, so insanely happy I am hardly responsible."

May was happy, too, but being overwhelmed by Frank's joy, she could not think of herself. She was only conscious of feeling glad that she could be so much to him. He had not for an instant released her; his arms were around her still.

"Now, May, I am going to be sensible, but you are to stand just as you are until you give me a promise."

"It won't be hard to promise you anything," she said.

"That is as it should be. Then, there being nothing to wait for, we can be married to-morrow."

That was rather unexpected, and May exclaimed, "My dear Frank, that is too utterly absurd. I have made no preparations."

"None are needed. You cannot know what my life has been, fettered under a heavy stone. It seemed as if it

would never lift ; when I realize it has gone I bound up into a new life. Do you understand this, May ? Now I want to add the outward bond, to have that sanction to our union. This union that is *forever*. No death can separate us—but circumstances in life might do so for a time. Only when you are my wife can I control circumstances, and I cannot risk a day. Think how often I have thought the end of my probation had come.”

“But, Frank, give me a little time to become accustomed to you before——”

“Stop, look at me—am I so changed ? I am browner and awfully old ; I acknowledge that. I am thirty-five, and each day a day older. Years ago I told you of my love and of how I determined, when I first saw little May, Jim’s little sister, that she should be my wife. My love has only grown stronger. Can’t you trust me to-morrow as you do to-day ?”

May was silent.

“Are there any more hospital duties looming up—any relatives crying for your care ?”

“Oh, Frank, I only have Jim and Kate. Let me wait and ask them what I had better do.”

“Very well. They will be home soon, and I tell you plainly, May, I will stand just so with both arms around you till you promise. You may talk an hour to them if you like.”

Now, my dear young reader, what would you have done about it ? May really had but one objection, and that was that she, the woman, saw the absurd side of the matter. Such a hurried wedding ! No time to let her friends know, no wedding-gown, no anything. Sarah might make a cake ; that was the only tangible form the matter took.

“Don’t you want to sit down, Frank ?”

“No, thank you, I am quite contented.”

The clock struck nine.

"They will be home in a few minutes, let us go and sit on the sofa ; do, Frank."

"As soon as you say 'yes,' little May."

"But I am a big grown up May now, and, Frank, I don't think you ought to insist in this way."

"Would there be any way easier for you, dear—then I'll put my arm so——"

"Frank, you are perfectly ridiculous. Just one day more."

"No, not one. I am afraid. I know someone would be ill. I have been adding up the days since I first saw you, it's fifteen years, that is more than five thousand four hundred and seventy-five days. No, I cannot give you one more."

"You are a mathematical genius," laughed May. "Must I really, Frank?"

"Yes, and you shall have your way ever after. Just let me be sure that you can never again say 'Go'."

"Then——*yes*——Frank."

At that moment Kate and Jim returned—I think May heard them coming—and Frank was welcomed and rejoiced over as if he were the prodigal son instead of the good boy who had waited so long and behaved so well in his exile from home.

They talked far into the night, till Jim remembered that Kate was tired ; even then she and May talked on up-stairs, and Jim and Frank down-stairs, till Frank himself, lunatic that he was, remembered that he had no right to destroy the comfort of the whole family even if he had no need for sleep. He was up again at six o'clock, and waited two hours at the town clerk's office before he could get a license, which was the only preparation he felt it necessary to make. They were waiting breakfast for him when he returned, and he had to bear a good deal of badinage on his rousing the town at daylight to get a marriage

license. "I have no doubt," said May, "that by this time it is fully understood that I am going to run away with some wild foreigner, for really, by sunlight, Frank, you are positively alarming with your immense mustache and long beard."

Alarming or not, May found that he would not trust her out of his sight, and therefore he was taken into all the consultations about this hurried wedding. Of course, the three "Sides," as May called Burnside, Brightside, and Waterside rushed into the conference. Mrs. Montgomerie went home to set Lucy to work, while the others took the first train to the city for wedding presents.

Sarah was only told to do her best in having a supper for the three families and some few friends, after the ceremony in the church. This was appointed for seven o'clock, so that the happy couple could take the nine o'clock train to New York. They were to have a wedding journey of two weeks, then two weeks at Burnside, and then Europe. Some of May's young friends undertook to make a bower of beauty of the church, while Kate sent invitations to rich and poor to be present; for Jim's sister was beloved by all who knew her.

"It's fortunate I have a white silk. I mean to tell the girls always to keep one ready, one can never know what may happen now that lovers become insane so easily," said May.

"Do you think my veil would do?" asked Kate; "I don't suppose you happened to have a bridal outfit entire."

"Oh, what an idiot I am!" exclaimed Frank, letting go of May's hand for a moment, and then dragging a trunk from the hall into the library where they were sitting; "you know I had to wait three days after your letter, May, before the steamer sailed, so I just bought things—here they are. There is a lace shawl, it will do for a veil, and a

diamond star for the wedding present, and a ring, and lots of traps."

"Well, of all extravagant boys you certainly are the worst. What will I want with diamond stars and laces?" exclaimed May, immensely pleased, however, with the rich contents of the trunk.

"Do what you like with them, dear; I didn't know exactly what to bring, so I jumbled everything together, but I think you might wear the veil."

She did, and tried it on then for her own and his edification; and, gaining permission to leave him for one hour, he having an idea that it would take that length of time to make her toilette, she managed to pack her trunk for her journey. Her lover was utterly unreasonable, and entirely unmanageable. Kate was out of patience with him, but May only laughed. There was no help for it, every one would have to excuse what was omitted, and she could only hope to get through it creditably.

By five o'clock Mrs. Ray and Mrs. Henry Montgomerie were back again laden with more than the usual burden of gifts, they having had a long list of commissions. Amid smiles and tears May opened box after box, learning in some measure how dear she had become to those among whom she had gone out and in, since she first came to Brighton.

"Isn't it wonderful?" she whispered to Kate.

"It's wonderful that you can think of going away when you are a positive necessity to all of us and to half the town. Frank, I *detest* you;" and Kate ran off upstairs directly into Jim's arms, where she poured out her tears and her sorrow.

"I'm thankful that I am going to take you away to-night," said Frank, with decision. "I knew how it would be. Only my firmness has saved me." This was followed by the last exhibition of his "firmness," as he called his per-

sistent obstinacy, for it was time for May to dress. But—they were alone, you remember; Kate and Jim were busy weeping on the staircase—so Frank took the opportunity to emphasize his words, and to prevent May from answering; this took fully five minutes, during which Kate partially recovered, at all events sufficiently to be ready to assist May.

The toilettes were made in good time, Kate insisting on Frank not being permitted to see May till they met on the piazza, where he was guarded by Mrs. Montgomerie, who drove down with them to the church. She was to give May away, as the phrase is, although Frank assured them it was a useless ceremony, as he intended to take her, if necessary, at the point of the bayonet.

The old lady, whose experiences with well-behaved and ill-behaved young people were extensive, succeeded in toning down these unexpected features in the groom's behavior; and, although the drive to the church was merely nominal in length, it was long enough to subdue him, so that he helped both ladies from the carriage with a dignity as praiseworthy as it was unexpected. The church, as you know, was near the parsonage, and they intended to walk, but, by special request from the young people, they drove, finding the reason in the existence of a grand porte cochère formed of evergreens. This structure was built in a day, and was the outcome of gratitude on the part of Job Beers, who incited his "jolly diggers" to pay this tribute to the sister of their much loved "parson."

Inside, the church was a mass of flowers, twined, wreathed, banked, and finally thrown down in heaps, for during the whole day baskets of bloom and glory were being emptied beside the workers. May's Sunday-school classes brought golden-rod and purple asters in a wheelbarrow! How the whole village heard of the wedding in that one day is still a mystery, but certain it is the entire

population seemed to be present. The town clerk left his office, the postmaster left his, the factories closed an hour earlier, and every possible honor was paid to the young girl who put aside her own happiness to care for the fever-stricken poor of the little town of Brighton.

It was well that Frank Raymond was calm now, and self-possessed. May needed all his strength to enable her to bear the varied emotions of the day, with the climax of this ovation. She answered firmly all the questions that her brother strove to ask in his usual voice, and both of them would have merited all praise had not "Jim's" voice at last faltered. It was when the bride raised her eyes to have one look at the dear face that had never turned to her but in love.

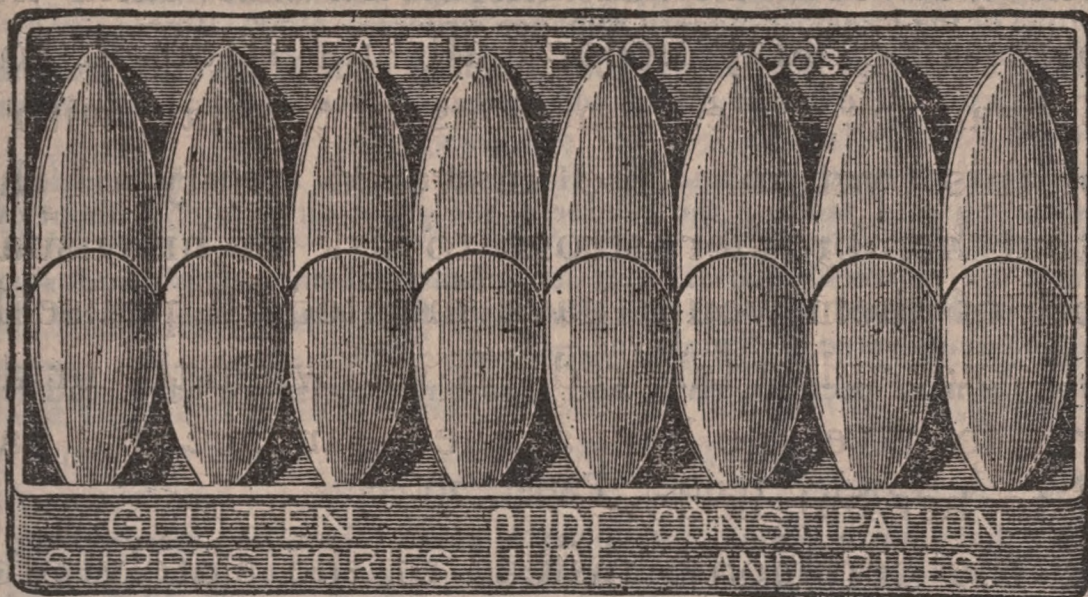
After the ceremony, instead of the stately procession to the door, they remained to receive the kindly greetings of their friends, and to examine and show their appreciation of the decorations, and of the love that prompted them.

Does the young reader care to know any more? Is not a successful wedding the end of everything? Is it best to tell of the supper, and of the farewells, and of Jim's last whispered words? No—I will tell no more; I must wind up somewhere, and if the story has been read, there is no need to follow lives that have begun, continued, and will end, in the Master's service.

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